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THE DUBLIN OF YESTERDAY

THE DUBLIN OF YESTERDAY

BY

P. L. DICKINSON

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PREFACE

THIS book is in no sense intended as an autobiography; nor as a critical survey of Dublin. The former would be of no interest, and I have not the qualifications for the latter.

It has seemed to me for some time that the ten years in Dublin and Ireland generally from about 1904–1914 were ones of rather unusual interest, including, as they did, the activities of the Abbey Theatre, and the revival in Literature and Art generally.

Politics also occupied an important place, and were destined to lead up to the final struggle which culminated in the establishment of the Free State.

It so happened that I knew most of the people at this time who were concerned in at least Art, Literature and the Theatre, and a good many politicians also.

My aim is to tell a little of what was going on in these matters and something of the people concerned, in the belief that this may be of interest to those who lived through that time; possibly to a wider field.

The period I have written of seems to me to be unique —such conditions will probably never occur again, nor is so great an amount of talent in regard to creative work likely to be concentrated again, one feels, in such a small place as Dublin.

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THE DUBLIN OF YESTERDAY

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DUBLIN IN PRE-WAR DAYS

The Anglo-Irish—The Celts—Dublin Second to London—My Early Days—The Season—My Grandfather—Church Dignitaries—The West Family—Mrs. J. R. Green—The Georgian Society—Dr. Mahaffy—An Irish Parson—Lord O'Brien—A Sunday Hunt—The Aberdeens—The City

DUBLIN in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was on the whole rather remarkable. It stood second only to London; and its social life was equal, and in some respects superior, to London. Everything that London provided, except Parliament, was to be found in Dublin. Court, Civil Service, Political and Artistic activity, and the Bar were all there. The Theatre was as in London, and the same plays and actors took the stage in each of the two capitals. Dublin had a rather high standard of general culture. There was little commercial element in the best of its social life. No pushful newspaper man had captured the public taste; few profiteering industrial magnates had attained social success through the power of their purses. Dublin was far more free from the meaner elements in its social life than was London of that time.

Added to these factors were the energy and wit of

the Anglo-Irish element. Which conjunction of racial characteristics has produced all that is valuable in Irish civilization of the last thousand years.

A brief digression is necessary here.

Ireland did have some rather noted phases of civilization. But one has to go back a long way, comparatively, to realize them. In certain activities of the pre-Norman period the Irish Gaels did achieve something. They produced an architecture (borrowed and inspired from Eastern sources), but an architecture beyond anything of the same date in the sister isle. They produced a system of illuminating manuscripts and of general domestic decoration better than anything in the rest of Western Europe of the time.

The Celts have contributed a good deal to the Anglo-Saxon—notably in the realms of sport. Horse-racing came into England from Ireland, as golf came from the Celts of Scotland long before cricket was thought of. Hockey came to England from the ancient Irish hurley, and half the names of the jockeys of to-day in England are Irish—as are, indeed, half the names of the English clerics of Catholic and Protestant churches. A curious combination of elements, and one which throws an amusing sidelight on the Gaelic contribution to civilization.

In certain other enterprises the Irish people contributed towards the great civilization of Western Europe. The Gael was a rung on the ladder, a rung which has long been overstepped. The modern movement in the new political entity—the Irish Free State—the modern movement back toward this Gaelic Hey-Day is pathetic : or, if you wish, it is comic ; certainly it is useless. It cannot last—Ireland is politically and economically and, above all, socially, one with Great Britain ; any such retrograde movement as an attempt at the compulsory revival of a dead language only becomes a local racial injury. It hurts every one a little ;

but it hurts the authors a lot. To those who, like myself, have had to leave their native country owing to the acts of their fellow-countrymen, a perfectly dispassionate judgment of the situation must be a little difficult. I love Ireland; few people know it better. There is hardly a mile of its coast-line or hills I have not walked. There is not a thought in me that does not want well-being for the land of my birth; yet there is no room to-day in their own land for thousands of Irishmen of similar views.

This is a very brief summing up of what, in my view, are the main causes that are injuring Irish development to-day.

After this digression, let us return to the theme of this chapter—Dublin of the 'eighties and 'nineties.

The 'old grey city' achieved great things in its social life. Its permanent canker of slums was the black spot. These were most distressing, and the cause of heartache to all who were interested in such things as their fellow-men; and who had what would nowadays be called a civic conscience. We must let the question of the slums pass; not that they are unimportant—heaven knows that they are not—but they do not enter into the scheme of this book.

For its size Dublin of this period was the most important city in Europe. There was a high pride of race, tradition and culture which has, in all probability, never been surpassed in modern life. There was an amazingly friendly relation between gentry and working-class. Remember, in Ireland of that time the middle-class was, in comparison to that of England, negligible. There was little trade or industry—either you were a gentleman or you were not. Belfast was exceptional, in this respect, to the rest of Irish life. In this Northern town (a sort of third-rate Glasgow) the finer things of life counted, at the time I write of, for little. It was as Leeds or Bradford of to-day—or worse.

In Ireland, and throughout the British Isles, Dublin stood as second only to London, and indeed, as I have said, many people whose opinions were worth consideration put Dublin first.

My own youthful days were spent in my father's vicarage. My father at a comparatively early age was appointed to the Deanery of the Chapel Royal. This was before the time of the disestablishment of the Irish Church. He was also Vicar of St. Ann's, then a most important Dublin parish. He had the rather curious distinction of being a parson under the jurisdiction of the Church of England and the Church of Ireland simultaneously, after the disestablishment. I do not think this dual control worried him much—he went his own way, as an upright man does, and was so independent in his broadness of outlook that he never received the bishopric that would have been his in any less narrow ecclesiastical community. All definitely dogmatic creeds must be rather narrow and intolerant—that is inevitable, and that is where creeds are breaking down and failing to-day. Ireland's little Church was, perhaps, the most narrow of any that survive in the Christian Churches of to-day—it was perpetually struggling against Roman Catholicism, its close and permanent foe at the gate. This did not tend to broadness of vision.

I was one of six brothers, and we were all, except a younger brother who died as a boy, educated at English preparatory and public schools. My own fate was Haileybury, where I learnt to play football and take a hiding. That is as much as one can hope for from any school, and I thank my parents' care and good thought that they should have taken the means to instil such lessons into me. Of books or so-called learning (mainly dry facts) I acquired as little in my school-days as could well be. The loss is *nil*. On leaving school at the early age of fifteen, through

receiving an injury to my leg from a bad fall off my eldest brother's hunter, life seemed very free and full of possibilities and hope.

A year or so abroad and the calling of an architect became my fate—or choice : both factors came in.

Dublin at this time, about 1900, was amazingly gay and the season was a brilliant one. People used still to come up and take houses for the season, and wealthy and poor of good family mingled for a few weeks at dinners, dances, Court functions, and all sorts of miscellaneous sports and games. Bicycling was still popular, motors were only just beginning, and yachting had not been ousted by more modern activities. Golf was hardly played. The social life was less strenuous than that of to-day, but probably even more foolish. My maternal grandfather, Dr. Evory Kennedy, a celebrity of his day, had left a large family. Most of the daughters, my aunts, had made rather distinguished marriages, and consequently we as children had a rather wide connexion with people of some note. This was advantageous, and owing to my parents' position our house was a centre of considerable activity—although we lived simply enough.

My grandfather had, while still a comparatively young man, achieved great success in his profession, and had purchased a fine old Georgian house lying at the foot of the Dublin Mountains, and about seven miles from the city. As children we spent much time there ; and as it was my birthplace it always held me under rather a spell. It had a haunted room and a ghost carriage and all the other suitable attributes of a country house. During my grandfather's time it was a rallying-point for many noted people. Ruskin and Lear both stayed there, and numerous political and literary celebrities, one or two soldiers, friends of my uncles, who were military magnates of the time, were visitors at frequent intervals.

One story told to me in my childhood stands out as illustrating the rather jolly atmosphere that prevailed at Belgard. Some Royal Commission or other was sitting in Dublin, and one of its members had gone to stay with my grandparents—I forget who he was, but remember he was a politician of note at the time. It was his first visit to Ireland. My aunts decided to pull his leg. Accordingly, before breakfast on the first morning of his visit, they caused a cow to be driven into the hall—a huge apartment—and each member of the household proceeded to milk the cow into their own porridge-bowls. The guest, with perfect manners, quietly followed their example, and it was not till some days afterwards that he was told of the plot. It always seemed to me that he scored.

My paternal grandfather was Bishop of Meath, and died at a comparatively early age, leaving a large family none too well provided for. My father and two other brothers entered the Church, and one of my aunts married Dean West, Dean of St. Patrick's. His daughter, my cousin, subsequently married Edward Lyttelton, who before he went to Eton was head master of Haileybury. This was the reason why some of my brothers and myself went to that particular school. The Deanery of St. Patrick, where we spent a good deal of our time as children, has figured rather prominently in the literature of Dublin. It was a Georgian house, situated in the midst of slums, and had half an acre of sooty garden where no flowers grew, so far as I remember, except London Pride. The Deanery boasted a unique gardener, one Edge, noted for his caustic and blasphemous remarks. One of my cousins, Hercules West, wrote a book about him which has been the subject of an essay by E. V. Lucas, and which enjoyed some popularity in its day. One story in it is perhaps worth repeating. One of my aunts, called by our generation Aunt Absie—a pious and kindly lady—used to look after

the garden. One day she had occasion to inquire of Edge where he had put certain seeds. Edge was overheard repeating the conversation to one of his cronies. In an impressive voice he said : ' Miss Absie come into the garden and she sees me. " Bloody wars," says Miss Absie, " where's the hell's me winter seeds ? " ' This became, easily enough, a family saying, and ' Where's me winter seeds ? ' was the stock phrase if anyone mislaid an article.

Another West cousin—Dick—was rather a good painter, and his work was advanced for his time, although, I suppose, the modern young artists would consider it beneath notice. I have some of his Irish and Italian landscapes, and very pleasing and restful they are to live with. This, to me, is a very important test of a picture.

Richard West lived mainly at Alassio, and about 1910 a group of residents in that town decided to build a library and picture-gallery as a memorial to him. The gallery was to be a home for a permanent collection of his works. By a curious coincidence I was offered the building of it (the committee had no idea I was related to Richard West), and it was built to my design and finished in 1912. The drawings were exhibited in the Royal Hibernian Academy of that year.

In these ten pre-war years in Dublin many interesting people took the stage. Prominent in my memory stands out Mrs. J. R. Green, who was a sort of connexion of mine, as her brother Jemmet Stopford had married my aunt. Mrs. Green was exceedingly kind to me as a young man, and I enjoyed many hospitable evenings at her home, both in London and in Ireland. She is gallantly spending the evening of her life in devoted duty to her country, at an age when any less brave spirit would demand the rest and repose of the fireside. Let us bow to her, those of a younger generation, and salute her as a fine example of courageous

womanhood. Mrs. Green and I once had a serious row, and I figured with her (I as a somewhat undistinguished antagonist) in a three-cornered correspondence in the Irish Press.

It happened thus. About 1910 a society was formed —the Georgian Society—with the object of recording the rapidly-vanishing splendours of eighteenth-century Dublin architecture. A public meeting was held, and I was, accidentally and unwillingly, pushed into being honorary secretary. A strong committee was formed, with Professor Mahaffy (afterwards Provost of Trinity) as president. Mahaffy, of whom I shall write more later, was my father's great rival as a wit during my father's lifetime. Their rivalry had been lifelong, and based mainly on temperament. My father's humour and outlook was of a kindly nature, while that of Mahaffy was caustic and inclined to be both cynical and Rabelaisian. During the time that I was associated with Mahaffy in the Georgian Society our relationship was of the most cordial nature. He gave me a generous help, and in his attitude towards myself was more than kind and friendly. I shall always treasure our relationship.

However, to continue his connexion with Mrs. Green and myself in its curiously-connected development. When the last volume of the Georgian Society came to be published, Mahaffy wrote a short and brilliant introduction. He made certain rather scathing remarks in relation to the youth of Dublin, and these were published, I rather believe, without being considered by the committee as a body. Sir Anthony MacDonnell, afterwards Lord MacDonnell, and Mrs. Green, as good Nationalists and Catholic sympathizers, took exception to these remarks (they were both members of the Society), and wrote to the *Irish Times* protesting against Mahaffy's observations. It behoved me as secretary to reply, and a spirited three-handed correspondence took place. During the confusion I used to

take tea with Mrs. Green at Boswell's Hotel (that well-known hostelry in Molesworth Street which has harboured so many distinguished guests), and discuss the situation. I was placed in a difficult position, as, while I agreed with Mrs. Green's point of view, yet I had perforce to be loyal to my own president.

One of Mahaffy's observations to which Mrs. Green took exception was something to the effect that the majority of the young men in Trinity, entering the learned professions, would be better in the counting-house and at the loom.

Unfortunately, I agreed (and still agree) with this particular observation. Ultimately the matter fizzled out, as all such duels do, and both sides got interested in more important activities. The correspondence ceased, greatly to my relief and, I have no doubt, to that of some unknown sub-editor of the *Irish Times* staff.

Mahaffy was a rather wonderful personality, but he suffered from a lack of dignity of manner. He always seemed a shade over-anxious to hold the stage. Further, his remarks and stories sometimes rather shocked people, emanating, as they did in his case, from a parson.

He was a curious mixture of pushfulness and kindliness. He was a snob, and used to boast of his familiarity with royalty. At a certain dinner he was discussing the Kaiser, and referred to him as 'one of the nicest emperors I ever knew'. Innumerable stories are told of him, but one of the best, which stands out in my memory, was one of an evening at some literary society or another where the musical and psychological value of different tongues was being discussed. Mahaffy said, quoting I don't know whom: 'I speak Italian to my mistress, Spanish to my king, French to my equals, English to my servants, and German to my dogs.' This, I think, takes a lot of beating.

He was a great sportsman, a first-class shot and fisherman.

All kinds of tales are told of feats performed by him, including one well-authenticated story of his bringing down a jack-snipe at between eighty and ninety yards, when over seventy years of age. No one who has not shot snipe can appreciate what this means. To those who have, comment is superfluous.

Mahaffy was instrumental in sending Oscar Wilde to Oxford. He said: 'You are not clever enough for Trinity, but they will be glad to have you at Oxford.' He was given to such remarks.

When he signed my recommendation for a commission in 1914, he wrote: 'I have known him to be of unblemished character since youth.' On reading which, I don't know whether his laughter or my own was the more hearty.

Among the many personalities that stand out as prominent in my own life of the time in Dublin is Horace Monroe, friend of my boyhood and early manhood. He is now Vicar of Wimbledon, one of the largest parishes in England, and rejoices (or sorrows) in six churches and about a dozen curates. Horace Monroe was the son of a distinguished and kindly judge who, before he was raised to the Bench, had a notable career as a Q.C. One of the other sons is Prime Minister of Newfoundland to-day. Horace was ordained to a curacy in my father's parish. He was not a theologian or a preacher, but was amazingly popular, through a simple kindliness of heart and by an example of a hard-working and unblemished life. In short, the type of parson and man who in a direct and simple way set an example of what an honestly convinced Christian should be. Most educated people disagree to-day with the doctrine of the Christian Church, and have not much belief in the teachings of orthodox Christianity, but we can admire and respect those to whom

conventional and ' revealed religion ' is a reality. The day will come, of course, when learning will reject Christianity as a revelation, although accepting the ethical code ; but this is still some way off. Meanwhile, let us be thankful for the elements of truth that the decent parson helps to put before a puzzled and, on the whole, rather unhappy humanity.

In complete contrast to Judge Monroe another prominent Irish judge was a close and intimate figure in my life—Lord O'Brien—Lord Chief Justice.

Lord O'Brien was perhaps the best-known Irish judge of his day, and played an important part in Irish (and English) life of the last period of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. I only knew him personally after he was Chief Justice, and my brothers and myself received hospitality from him and kindness from his family which it is always a pleasure to remember and to acknowledge.

Seven or eight years before the war, Lord O'Brien took Newlands, a fine old place about seven miles from Dublin, as his residence. Newlands adjoined my grandfather's old home, which at this time was in possession of my cousin, Lady Lawrence. I spent a great deal of my time there as a young man, and met Lord O'Brien and his family frequently. One winter my cousins were away, having taken a villa at Bordighera, and one of my brothers and a friend or two had been lent Belgard. Lady O'Brien asked us to dinner, and we went, and had as jolly an evening as could be imagined—some one played the banjo, and we sat round the fire in the ' little drawing-room ', singing late into the night. This was the forerunner of many such evenings. It may or may not be discreet to relate an incident that occurred subsequent to one of the dinners. Some one—my brother Cyril, I think—had written a song (we were all prolific song-writers), something about ' Lord O'Brien, that noble scion ', and the evening had

been a particularly cheerful one. We said our good nights in due course and started home. There was a sunk fence or ha-ha between the two demesnes, one end of which fence ran into a fair-sized pond. Our customary method of crossing the fence was by means of a fallen tree. This night was very dark, and we walked, as young men do, heedlessly, and hilariously discussing the events of the evening. Suddenly, without warning, we all four stepped straight into the pond—all in our best evening clothes, and up to our arm-pits. Fortunately we were all concerned, and the story, when subsequently told, had to be one against all of us equally. We never told Lord O'Brien, although, indeed, it would have been flattering to his port and to his butler's attentive administration of that excellent wine.

Lord O'Brien was a keen sportsman and he and his daughters turned out regularly with the Kildares, during his time at Newlands. We ran a small pack of beagles for two or three seasons, which pack I hunted. Half the pack was kennelled in the Newlands stables and half in ours. One day's hunting stands out in my memory, and I expect in that of the other conspirators also. Lord O'Brien had a large Sunday lunch-party, and we arranged for a lawn meet at 2 o'clock, to amuse his guests. I am not sure, but I believe the Duke of Connaught, then Commander-in-Chief, and some of his family were present. I am not certain, after these long years, on this point, and may be mixing two Sunday meets in my mind. However, the main facts are clear enough. I knew it was hopeless to look for a hare in Newlands, and within three miles of it, but a hunt we had to have. Accordingly I arranged a careful drag laid by our kennel-boy, and had suitable people along the line to tally the hare. We found, strange as it seemed to those followers familiar with the neighbourhood, in the park, and had a rattling good hunt for a field or two. A local herd, one Tim, was encountered

waving his hat. I got hounds on to the line and shouted, 'Have you seen the hare?' Tim shouted in return, 'Be God I have, Mr. Dickinson; she has just crossed through that gap, and she as big as a goat.' Which was perfectly true, for Johnny the kennel-boy was a stout lad. We hunted a nice line of three or four miles, and killed well out of sight of the field. Carefully-prepared mask and pads were produced, and the leading guests went away happily. I strolled back to tea with Lord O'Brien, and remarked on the way, 'Well, sir, don't you think that was a nice hunt?' He turned round and looked me slowly up and down, and then winked. 'Drag, my boy. Drag.'

He was not taken in for a moment; the only man out, I believe, who was not.

Perhaps some one who was out that day may read this: if so, I ask their forgiveness for my deception.

Lord O'Brien embarrassed me one night. The occasion was a large dinner at Newlands, and I happened to be sitting at the far end of the large table to him. During a pause in the conversation, he shouted down the table to me, 'Now, my boy, what is your real Christian name? I hear them all calling you Page, but what does that stand for?' I replied that it was my real name, so called after an uncle. Lord O'Brien looked at me for a moment, and then remarked, 'Page?—ah, a virgin page, I hope?' My brother and I, and every one else, collapsed in hopeless laughter, although indeed, being a shy lad of only twenty-two or so, I felt rather embarrassed.

It was at the O'Briens' house that I once or twice met Sir Edward Carson. I shall have more to say later on about that remarkable Irishman, but this incident seems to me to be worth recording at this stage. I was lunching one Sunday with the O'Briens, and walked up to the house just before lunch, to discover a large party of people engaged in eager discussion on the front

door-steps. I recognized one or two people I knew, and made my how-do-you-dos as well as the circumstances allowed me. I found myself standing near Sir Edward, but nobody happened to introduce me to him. Sir Edward, no doubt seeing that I was embarrassed, came forward and put out his hand, saying, ' How are you ? ' A kindly act to a young man whom he did not know from Adam ; an act which I shall remember all my life. It is such small and accidental actions that show a man's real nature, and in the troublesome times that came afterwards I often thought of Carson's courtesy, during a period when he was regarded as little short of a devil by many folk in Ireland, and, indeed, in England also. He was a devil, but in the Irish and not the English sense. Anyone who is binational will understand what I mean by this—if not, explanation is useless and unprofitable.

About four or five years before the war Lord Aberdeen, an excellent and well-meaning man, was Lord Lieutenant. Lady Aberdeen loyally supported him. This task was a difficult one, and they were not suitable people for its successful tackling. The Liberal business was all right in England, but in Ireland it was ill understood, and Liberalism was translated as licence ; and licence it was. Social amenities were flung to the winds, and the rag-tag and bobtail of Dublin went to Court. After a few years of the Aberdeens' term of office many people of breeding gave up all idea of going to the Castle, and social life in Dublin underwent an amazingly rapid decline. Man after man of my own generation, who formerly would, as a matter of course, have gone to the Court functions, avoided them, and laughed when the Castle was mentioned. Without being a snob, it was no pleasure and rather embarrassing to meet the lady at dinner who had measured you for your shirts the week before. As a result of this upsetting of values, social life in Dublin, from the point of

view of good breeding, rapidly declined: whether the ultimate result will be for good or ill, for better or worse, it is impossible to say. My point is that for many people in Dublin at the time it was all rather sad, and Dublin in 1910 was a vastly different place from what it was a decade or two earlier. Other causes operated to cause social decay. I do not wish to detract from the Aberdeens' excellent intentions. They were kindly folk and good friends to Ireland, and, as I said, had a difficult task and an almost impossible period to deal with. The worst that can be said of them perhaps is that they were rather lacking in dignity. Lady Aberdeen was always known in Dublin as 'Ishbel'—he, of course, as viceroys in Ireland have been called for a hundred years, 'His Ex.'

Lord and Lady Aberdeen did most valuable work among the poor. She established district nurses in out-of-the-way places, and they helped in a thousand ways to improve the life of their less-favoured fellowmen. Their services were always available for any charitable cause, and their kindness of heart was proverbial. If I have laughed at them a little, it is in no unkindly way.

I wrote some verses of Dublin at this time: sentiment demands their reproduction here. I have not much illusion as to their merit:

DOCKS OF DUBLIN

The tired town in the evening light
rests in a peaceful mood;
its toil is over, and e'er the night
descends, and the sun's last gleam takes flight
over the waves in its western dance,
romance is real, and the real romance.
And I dream in solitude.

The slender spires against the sky
glow in the western rays;

tapering masts of ships rise high,
round them the lazy sea-birds fly.
The quiet river scarcely flows,
the wind is fallen, and no breath blows ;
there rises a soft grey haze.

The glory of country, of wood and dell,
is beauty that all men know ;
the mighty peak and the sweeping fell,
of these men think, and of these they tell ;
but the sleepy town in the evening light
is just as fair as the fairest sight
I see, wher'er I go.

Seek not the world for landscape fair,
go not to distant lands ;
one may fail to find it there,
wonderful things are not so rare ;
plenty there are in this western isle,
if a man will open his eyes a while,
and he only understands.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

The Court—The Bar—The Library—The Judges—Ross—Wylie—Theological Questions—The Illogical Human Mind—Lawyers a Curse in Politics—The Medical Profession—Wicklow and 'The Baste'—Swift's Asylum—Dr. W. Smith—Gogarty, Surgeon and Poet and Politician—R. C. Church, the popular Church—The present Protestant Clergy—Stories of my Father—The Military Element in Dublin's Life

IN this chapter I am going to deal with rather unclassified energies and people. Many of them do not fit in with any scheme, and must be mentioned in a sort of hash, or Irish stew. Not that they would consider themselves in this category, but that from my angle of vision they occupied this position. The Irish Court—rather an absurd construction in itself—was particularly absurd when run by people like the Aberdeens. The only point of such a Court was that it should be the imitation (or reflection) of that of England. Its objective and justification, if any, was on similar grounds. During this time it became merely grotesque, and, indeed, offensive, to those of a Tory habit of mind, while being anti-Irish in political aim to those of the extreme Nationalist view. Consequently it was popular only with middle-class folk, who liked to feel they were dressing up in feathers and trains and strutting in rarely-worn evening suits, and swimming in a dashing social life entirely foreign to their upbringing but congenial to their worldly ambitions. I have written in another chapter on this Court life and its

effect on the social life of the day, and will not enlarge further on it here.

It was all rather sad, and extremely silly and entirely non-progressive. Nobody was pleased; at least, nobody who mattered; and no one got anywhere by its means. It was not an affirmative position—it was a negative; and merely an acquiescence in a vague sinking and rising of political creeds, which, in Ireland means class and education against ignorance and lack of thought.

Perhaps the most active element of any one group in Dublin of this time was the Bar. I will talk of Art, the Theatre and Literature elsewhere in this book. The Bar took a prominent place in the life of the town. Judges entertained lavishly, or meanly (according to their personalities and the incomes of their wives). The Senior Bar did the same in a slightly modified way; and the Junior Bar dined out (unless, indeed, it went out to high tea) whenever and wherever it could, but more especially in the houses of solicitors with pretty daughters. At this time the English and Irish Bar differed widely in the system in which they worked during their daily routine, if waiting for briefs. In London the lawyer has chambers, and solicitors' clerks come to them in these apartments. In Dublin no such privacy existed. The arrangement was crude in the extreme. In the old Four Courts, burnt down in one phase of the rebellion (or revolution, call it what you will), was a large and sombre room known as the Library. Here the Juniors used to gather and tell each other smoking-room stories. In this particular phase of communal life it was as the London Stock Exchange. If a young barrister was wanted, the clerk or other person who needed him approached a barrier at one end of the vast room and told a gowned attendant the name of the particular barrister he wanted to see. The attendant, to the great discomfort of the amateur

inquirer, but, I suppose, to the satisfaction of the habitual, proceeded to the sort of turnstile that shut off the holy of holies from the general and patient public, and bawled out the name of the barrister in question. 'Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. Slattery, Mr. Jones,' as the case might be. Mr. O'Reilly would finish the story he was telling and stroll across to the barrier and quell the inquirer with a you-be-damned look. Eventually he would thaw and take one down to a consultation-room in an ill-lit vault. Thus the machinery of getting legal advice in pre-war Dublin. I speak with some knowledge, as I was frequently engaged in legal cases as a witness, and suffered in time and money from the result of a worn-out professional system. It was picturesque ; so is Norman architecture. They are equally adapted to modern standards.

I knew many of the judges one way or another. Some were members of my Masonic Lodge ; some one met at casual social affairs, or in the interest of some common game or sport.

Judge Ross, with his genial smile and strong Ulster accent, was a very well known figure, as he is in London to-day. He was a man of great drive and energy, but, I imagine from the few times I met him, without great intellectual depth. He was my brother's chief for many years during the time he presided over the Land Court. I once saw Ross do a remarkable feat. One Sunday I was lunching with my cousin Lady Lawrence at her home, Belgard, which is referred to elsewhere in these pages. The place was situated at the foot of the Dublin Mountains. Ross declared that he could tell what was on the other side of a hill in a country he had not seen. My cousin was much interested and, taking him at his word, marched him off to the back of the park, where a considerable hill rose behind some plantations. The judge carried out his contract and described in minute detail the landscape behind the hill, invisible at that

moment to us. It was a perfectly accurate description, so full of detail as to preclude all possibility of fluke or guesswork. Types of fences crossing various fields, the roofs of farm-houses, streams and bridges were all told of absolutely correctly. It was a remarkable illustration of second-sight, or whatever you please to call it. If the judge had the same powers while a counsel of judging what was in people's minds (especially a jury's) as he had of judging what was on the other side of a hill, it is small wonder he succeeded at the Bar.

Judge Ross holds the distinction of being the last Lord Chief Justice of Ireland: an office abolished at the time the Free State was established He is the illustrious last of a long line of predecessors, some famous, some infamous.

Another Irish judge, well known in circles connected with horses in England to-day, demands some attention —Judge Wylie. At the outbreak of War, Wylie was the youngest K.C. (he took silk at about thirty), and was engaged in the activities of a large and select practice. At the same time he ran a farm and training stable outside Dublin, where he had a charming little house and many good horses. He was for some years a prominent horseman at the jumping competitions at the Dublin Horse Show, perhaps the highest standard of show jumping in the British Isles.

Wylie had a meteroic career. A K.C. at thirty, the war came along. He joined the Graduates Corps, of which at the time I was sergeant-major. This was the first stage of our acquaintance, an acquaintance which (on my side at least) soon became a friendship. I taught Wylie to slope arms, form fours and stand at ease in the usual way. He was an apt recruit. In a week or two he was drilling like a veteran and soon got a commission. I will tell one story of our co-operation, when acting as instructors in the

Irish Command School of Instruction for Officers, in 1915.

Part of my duty was to set young officers a certain problem in night-marching by means of the compass. An officer was given a certain point on the map and told to march S.W. by S. for 1,000 paces, or some such detail. The point he should arrive at was, of course, fixed by scale by me. The object of the exercise was to see how near the officer got to the proper objective. The results naturally varied in extreme degrees. Many officers marched the wrong way—results were often comic.

Wylie and I were discussing the difficulties one day, and he remarked (or I did) what difficult problems could be met in the course of this exercise. We wondered how we could ourselves do it. Accordingly we got the adjutant to set us a real difficult problem. We sallied forth to carry it out—the night was dark as pitch ; we had to cross innumerable fences and dodge numbers of trees. We had to move about 2,000 yards. We carried on, and by dint of Wylie's accuracy halted at the end of our quest of about an hour and a half's groping and fumbling and stumbling. The adjutant appeared from nowhere. We were within ten yards of our objective. I contributed little to the accuracy of the result ; the effort was Wylie's—a wonderful achievement.

Wylie was one of your all-round efficient men ; yet, on reflection, all-round is hardly correct. Wylie was entirely lacking in artistic appreciation, and his knowledge of modern literature was slight. During the momentous year of 1916, after the rebellion, Wylie was detailed as an officer to prosecute the arrested rebels. He got a conviction for several—eight or ten—I think, and they were hanged, or shot, or done away with in whatever particular manner was decreed at the moment. I cannot remember details, as I was concerned at the time with the first battle of the Somme,

and Ireland seemed a trifling irritant in the more important affairs of life as we lived it then in France.

At any rate, Wylie prosecuted these rebels, who were duly hanged (or shot), and as a result took his life in his hands. Lord French was then in charge in Dublin.

I do not know the ins or outs of the history, but it is reputed that Lord French told Asquith that something must be done for Wylie, and accordingly he was made a High Court Judge at about thirty-six years of age. At any rate, a judge he was made, and all recent reports that one hears is to the effect that he is an excellent man on the Bench. Judge Ross, to whose court Wylie succeeded, is said to have referred to him as 'that whipper-snapper' on hearing of his appointment. It was a case of the clash of the generations—age versus youth, a tragic enough business, but in which one hopes for youthful victory; otherwise how can there be any progress?

The Dublin Bar as a whole was composed of men exceedingly clever in their way. They were not, however, generally very cultivated, and their outlook was often narrow enough. I remember after dinner one night in Jammet's, a famous restaurant, hearing Harold Murphy (now a well-known leader at the English Bar) discourse on his text that 'artists are the curse of everything'. He was a man of ability, a leading light at school I remember, but I never heard him give an opinion or contribute an idea in a discussion of a metaphysical or philosophical nature. Like most barristers, he seemed to be entirely concerned with the obvious facts of life, and the wherefores did not seem to interest him. This is the typical lawyer's mind. It is common enough. A few people think sufficiently deeply to get down to elemental facts before they can begin to take stock of a point of view, or a principle. They try earnestly to arrive at some definite data from which

they can, as it were, kick off. For instance, in theological questions one can argue something like this.

There is a God, or there is not a God. The world and the universe is the accidental result of certain accumulations of chemical combinations uncontrolled and working no one can guess whither. As an alternative, there is a God. This God is either omnipotent and omniscient ; or He is not. If He is omnipotent, then He is planning something obviously incapable of being understood by man ; but man can have a confidence in the present and a supreme hope for the future.

If God is not omnipotent, then He is experimenting, and it is dreadful to be something which is being experimented upon. I reject the idea. Then the difficulty is : if God is omnipotent and omniscient, He has created life knowing precisely what is going to happen to each individual ; therefore each individual life is planned before the individual is born. Therefore each person is predestined to do as he does, and free-will ceases to be.

Now comes a difficulty ; logic breaks down, many people feel that although God does know what is going to happen to each life, yet free-will exists in so far as man is concerned. This is the point of view of large numbers of people to-day. Logic breaks down, and we accept, blindly, if you like, a sort of compromise on which we base our lives.

I do not mention the point of view of ' revealed religion ' ; it is outside my line of thought.

Now, the above, as it seems to me, is the point of view of some one trying to arrive at essentials—at a kicking-off point. This is a type of mind rare enough, but which is of the sort that makes the reformers and revolutionists who have achieved something, so far as my study of history goes.

The other type—ninety-nine per cent. of humanity—start their theological argument as Protestant v.

Catholic, or Nonconformists ; or Christian v. Mohammedan—beginning in the middle of the whole question. The Catholic theologian starts his belief and his argument in a discussion of the authority of the Pope v. individual interpretation of the Bible. He is here not even in the middle, but far advanced into the question of revealed religion. The real beginning lies, as put forward in the preceding paragraph, in the question : Is there a God ?

Now, the latter is the barrister's mind. The surgeon, the architect, the chemist, the creative artist, sculptor, painter, writer or musician of the best type search for the elemental truths before they begin construction ; I assume, at least, honesty and intelligence. The practising barrister is not concerned with truth. His business is to prove the other man wrong and himself right—regardless of deep thought, sincerity, or a search for truth. ' I am right, you are wrong ' is, and must be, his creed. That is why the lawyer is such a curse in politics to-day. He is the evil genius of the nation. He never looks, nor, by the nature of his training can he look, for truth.

This is true of all the Bars of Europe. It was especially true of the Irish Bar, owing to its small size, its intimate knowledge of members of each other, and to its insularity. Ability, great ability there was, but the whole outlook of its members began in the middle of essentials. Therefore the members were, on the whole, superficial and trivial in their contribution toward the national life.

Lawyers are necessary, but, as I have tried to point out, detrimental as a whole to the civilized development of a nation. In politics most educated people of to-day regard them as something worse. The training of the lawyer of its very nature tends to make him successful in politics, but it does not move towards finer ideals and a striving for a more developed life. That is the trouble,

and the training (and temperament) do not lead towards any creative or fine ideal. A country can only be governed well by men of imagination and vision—men who work with some high motive ; not by men who wish to assert themselves, or who are always striving to prove themselves right, regardless of an abstract morality and understanding of the method of evolution.

Let us turn to a more pleasant topic—the medical profession, which in Dublin has always ranked exceedingly high ; ever since and during the eighteenth century distinguished men have studied medicine in Ireland's capital.

To-day the Dublin medical schools rank second to none, while the Rotunda maternity course is the highest that can be taken by doctors to practise as specialists in that capacity. My grandfather, Evory Kennedy, was master of the Rotunda at the age of twenty-seven ; he was one of the first women's doctors (if not the very first) to use choloroform in cases of childbirth ; a practice much condemned in its early days ; and one which brought him and his contemporaries many enemies in his profession, and also outside it.

I have numbered two, at least, of recent masters of the Rotunda among my close personal friends—Gibbon FitzGibbon was one ; and not only was he a friend of my youth and early manhood, but his charming wife was an intimate friend of my family since childhood. Her father, Dr. Stoker, was a brother of Bram Stoker, author of *Dracula*, and I remember the interest in our immediate circle when that gruesome work of dreadful imagination appeared—I think about 1900.

There was always a strong bond between the medical students and the Dublin Metropolitan Police, that magnificent body of efficient giants, observed and appreciated by all strangers in those days. It used to be the custom, and for all I know it still is, for students who had gone a certain distance in the Rotunda course

to be sent out, unattended, to the urgent cases in the poorer districts. On such occasions the young medico would have to pass frequently through bad slum quarters where the police walked warily. On doctor meeting policeman, the invariable salutation ran: 'Good night, Sergeant', 'Good night, Doctor'. Both achieved a rank to which neither was entitled, but a great deal of kindly goodwill was established.

Dublin doctors figured to an incredible extent in the life of Ireland. Many of them were men of good family, and their social status was an assured one. They contributed very largely to the activities of Dublin society, and were to be found engaged in all sorts of pursuits, from literature to hunting.

Certain, rather notable, personalities stand out: men who would have been noted in any group of people.

Richard Leeper, head of Swift's Asylum (founded by Dean Swift as a hospital for lunatics), was a very remarkable man. He was a dispensary doctor in a medium-sized village, where he had charge of a small country lunatic asylum. He achieved such success in his management of the insane that when the office of doctor to Swift's fell vacant, although only a man of about, I think, five-and-thirty, he was offered the appointment by the Board of Governors, or whatever title these people took to themselves. Dick Leeper, besides being a doctor of more than ordinary skill, was one of the best shots and fishermen in that super-sporting county of Wicklow, where every man is a good shot and fisherman; probably also a good man to hounds in the hunting areas of that county's diverse country; I mean geologically diverse.

I must tell one story of Dick Leeper's which I had from him.

On Lugnaquilla, Ireland's second highest mountain, lies a rather peculiar lough, situated in a wild rock-

bound basin at about two thousand feet above sea-level. It is known as Kelly's Lough, and is reputed to hold, and does hold, curiously enough, some very large trout. But they are hard to get. For a long time the lough was supposed by the people living in the Glen to harbour a monstrous fish known as 'The Baste'. The nearest village is about seven miles away, and a very rare visitor used to come from there to fish Kelly's Lough. It might be one in two years. I do not suppose three rods a year got on to this romantic and isolated water. More probably, with the exception of those of one local worthy poacher, it would be three or four years between the visits of fishermen.

One year, a certain Englishman, a good fisherman, was at Rathdrum. He heard of 'The Baste' and decided to try for him. Leeper's tale, as he repeated it, was that 'he went up with a collapsible boat on the back of an ass. He unyoked the boat, put up his rod, and went on to the water. Never before had boat sullied the waters of the lough. When in the middle, a big ripple arose, and "The Baste" came up and looked at the fisherman. He gave one yell, pulled for the shore, leapt out, and never stopped running till he had gone the whole seven miles to Rathdrum.'

Dr. Leeper had as fine a collection of stories, mostly gathered from his own experience, as I have ever met contained in any one man's head. Moreover, he told them extraordinarily well. One, which, so far as I know, has never appeared in print, is an amazing illustration of the ingenuity of the mind of the mentally unfit.

Dr. Leeper used to walk in the garden of Swift's Asylum, and it was his habit to talk to his patients when he met them on these pious pilgrimages. One day he encountered a certain patient and the conversation was something like this. The patient, a man of considerable arrogance, came up to the doctor and said,

'What the devil do you mean by walking in my garden without permission?' Dr. Leeper replied, 'I am very sorry if I am trespassing, but would you kindly let me know whom I have the honour of addressing?' 'Certainly, sir; you are entitled to know that: I am Napoleon.' 'Thank you,' said Leeper. 'I am delighted to have the honour of meeting you'—and passed on his way. A few days later, he was again in the same part of the garden, and the same lunatic again stopped him, with an angry demand as to where he was going, and why he was wandering in his garden. Leeper apologized, and again asked if he might have the honour of knowing the name of so illustrious a person. 'Certainly,' came the reply. 'I am Cromwell.' 'Ah,' said Leeper, 'that won't do. Last week you told me you were Napoleon.' The lunatic pondered this briefly, and looking up brightly, remarked, 'Oh, yes, my dear chap, but that was by another mother.'

A famous physician of an older generation, and one with a great reputation, comes back to my recollection—Dr. Walter Smith. An able and farseeing man; a kindly friend and a popular public figure, he stood out for several decades as a prominent character. He used to do his rounds in a very smart Victoria and pair, immaculate in top-hat and frock-coat. He looked like a diplomat of the old school, and his manner and voice were perfect. He pulled my family through their childish and more serious ailments, and when my young brother had a long and weary illness, he was every help and comfort to my mother. To me he was always in the relation of a trusted uncle, and I cherish many kind memories of his sayings and doings.

He had a keen sense of fun. At one time he was lecturing on some subject or other—I forget what—at the Trinity Medical School. He was lecturing on a subject that had to do with internal liquids of the body. He took up a test-tube and said to his class, 'Now,

gentlemen, I want to test your powers of observation. This tube contains liquid of a peculiar nature, and I want you to dip your fingers in it and see by your sense of taste if you can find anything uncommon.' He then dipped his own finger in the test-tube and placed it on his own tongue.

The test-tube was passed round the class, and each student placed his finger on his tongue after dipping it in the liquid. When the tube had travelled the whole circuit, Dr. Smith took it back, and said, ' Gentlemen, I told you I wanted to test your powers of observation. I gave you a test for this liquid by taste. Now, you each dipped your first finger into it and placed that on your tongues. Now, if you had observed me closely, you might have perceived that while I placed the tip of my first finger in the test-tube, I placed my second finger on my tongue. Gentlemen, you are all singularly deficient in the powers of observation.'

I knew many of Dr. Smith's generation of doctors, but space forbids me writing of them here.

Some of the present men, naturally enough, stand out as sterling personalities among professional men of to-day. One of them is Senator Gogarty. I never knew him well ; an occasional dinner together was the only chance of intimate conversation between us, but he was for some years a member of the same club as I was ; I met him at odd moments, and discussed many and diverse topics with him. Gogarty was a contemporary of my own, and we started our professional careers at about the same time.

He had a remarkable university career, doing as well as could be in the Medical School, and in addition gained a high literary reputation. His poem on ' The Rose-Red Georgian Homes ' of Merrion Square stands out as a clear-cut cameo, and a shining example of what modern verse can be in handling an everyday subject. He achieves the quality of the Troubadours of Provence,

of Mistral himself. Would that the Sitwells and their tribe would do the same ! I must not enlarge on this topic. The position of the very modern type of young writers and painters is, to me, so self-conscious and lacking in honesty as to preclude it being taken seriously as creative art : this is not a question of intolerance between youth v. middle age, but rather one of difference of temperament. Among my most intimate friends, with whom I find myself absolutely free in words, thought and action, are several of a generation far younger than my own.

Gogarty is almost a great poet ; he is certainly a very good poet—as well as being a surgeon of great skill. He is now a politician, being a senator ; but it is difficult to visualize him in this capacity, as he seemed to me to be too impatient of fools to be able to take his part effectively in the rough-and-tumble of that absurd medley expressed in the form of representative government. However, good luck to him, and may Ireland's sons of the parliamentary class be always as able and talented !

Gogarty figured rather prominently in a certain episode during the troublesome times following the withdrawal of the British from Ireland. I do not recollect the exact date, nor the full details ; but he was taken prisoner by some section or another, and dragged off to a house some miles from Dublin on the banks of the Liffey ; during the night he made a sensational escape by swimming the river in mid-winter. This episode was made a good deal of at the time—sensationalism ran riot in Ireland in the two or three years following the war.

A certain section of the English Press, feeling rather flat after the war, used Ireland to fill their columns. Irish news was grossly exaggerated by both sides. I, as an Irishman moderately loyal to King and Constitution, disliked this. Many people see the world

in black and white (or black and tan), whereas, to my view, the world is a series of greys with a good deal of purple in the mixing.

I must get on with the Dublin doctors. Mervyn Crofton was a contemporary of my own, and a personal friend. He ranks now, I imagine, among the first dozen bacteriologists in Europe. In the pre-war days in Dublin he had many enemies in his own profession, but, despite that, took a leading part in the world of medicine at a comparatively early age. In the early stages of the war I taught him to drill, during my time as a sergeant-major in the Graduates Corps, and very well he did it. I shall tell a little of this in my second last chapter.

Another doctor of the pre-war days, and of an older generation, who was a conspicuous figure, was Sir Thomas Myles. A great boxer and athlete in his youth, he was renowned as an operator, and carried the direct methods of the ring into his professional life. They used to tell in club smoking-rooms how, when Myles was an undergraduate, he and his brother, when they wanted an evening's diversion, used to wander down to the docks and enter any low-down pub, and insult the first hefty-looking docker it contained, for the sake of a row. I cannot say if this is true, but from what I know of Sir Thomas, I am inclined to believe it. Before the days of motors he used to drive a very smart outside car, and his good horses and neat turn-out were well known as a cheerful sight in the Dublin streets. One could write a book on the doctors of Dublin, but I can only mention a few that I knew fairly well.

Charlie Fitzgerald was one of the best-known figures in the life of the Irish capital in the years about 1900. He was an oculist, but looked like a Parisian artist of the Du Maurier period. He invariably wore a black suit, with a wideawake hat with an enormous brim, and a long, flowing bow-tie. He wore a pointed beard

and walked rapidly with a light and swinging step. He was a very old friend of my parents, and was to me a romantic figure of picturesque adventure in my young days. One of his sons became an actor of some distinction, and played, I believe, although I rather forget the details, some good parts with Sir Henry Irving.

One more doctor of the time must be mentioned—Dr. Purefoy. He was a very well known figure in the streets, and had a very large maternity practice. Like Myles, he drove a very smart car with a fast-trotting horse, harnessed American-fashion, with extra traces direct from the bit to the shafts. His horses used to go like a fire-engine, and his tough-looking coachman used to handle them fast through the traffic in a way it was a pleasure to watch.

Coming from a stock of parsons, the doings of the Irish Church were an important factor in the early life of my brothers and myself. With the reaction common in such cases, we all of us got away from Church life fairly early; and to me to-day the whole matter of ecclesiastical activity is unreal. As I am not an orthodox Christian, however, my views on the subject may obviously offend those who are, so I refrain from further remarks on the subject. Whether one agrees or does not agree with any group of people in the world, it should not affect one's judgment of their characters and their honesty of purpose and their contribution to this complicated machine of civilized life. The more one thinks the less dogma appeals, unless, indeed, one thinks on dogmatic lines, which to me is not thinking at all.

The bishops of the Irish Church are the leaders of a lost crusade. Their predecessors (as the Catholics see it) grabbed the cathedrals from the national Church, but despite this they are fighting a losing and hopeless fight.

The Roman Church in Ireland has identified itself

with the rights of the people—hence its strength in the past, and its power to-day, a power still important despite a certain falling of prestige.

Primate Alexander, a friend of my father, was Archbishop of Derry when I first remember him. Scholar, theologian, and great preacher as he was, I mainly think of him now as a colossal mountain of a man, with a round face from which his surplice descended in flowing lines. Late in his life he came to preach at one of my father's churches, the Chapel Royal. The pulpit here was awkwardly arranged, with a very narrow stair leading to it. My father realized that it would be very difficult for the old man to make the ascent of the staircase. Accordingly, two or three of us boys were told off to stand by to help. When the time came for the Primate to get into the pulpit, my father's fears were realized—he could not get in—but my brothers rushed to the rescue and pushed with such a hearty goodwill that the poor old man went through the aperture like a cork from a bottle. He preached, with his usual eloquence, for, I think, about half an hour; although what he talked about concerned us little or not at all, his voice and eloquence were such that one was carried along with little regard for subject.

Alexander was the last of the State-appointed bishops. Long after he has been forgotten, his wife will be remembered as the author of the hymn, 'There is a Green Hill Far Away'; one of the very few in the hymn-book that have any distinctive literary and musical quality.

At certain times of the year, during meetings of the Synod, our vicarage seemed to be overrun with parsons, and besides this there were always the curates, of course, in and out on business with my father, and often with my mother. Many of these curates are now bishops, deans, canons, etc., and I often smile when I see the Lord Bishop of So-and-So, in the daily Press, addressed

the meeting on such-and-such. I think of him probably as that nice silly ass whom we used to rag so unmercifully in his curatical days at home. I suppose if one of these friends of my youth ever reads an article of mine (and I supopose some of them must) their feelings will be exactly similar to mine. That, perhaps, is the main difference, if, indeed, difference there be, between the average Englishman and the average Irishman. The Englishman takes the men at the top of the tree rather seriously ; the Irishman regards them as well-meaning but inefficient quacks—as something to laugh at in a kindly way.

I can say for my own part, as an exiled Irishman living in England to-day, there are only three politicians who command any respect from me, and as these three are in different parties, my political allegiance remains something of a difficulty. 'All governments are bad, but some are worse than others.'

I must carry on with this subject of Dublin pre-war parsons.

Many stories have been told in print of my father and his many excellent public sayings. He was neither a great orator nor great preacher ; but he had an uncanny gift of saying amazingly quick things apropos the subject in hand. One such story can be quoted as an example. During the debate of some highly controversial subject in the Synod, my father was put up to defend some point or other. After he had spoken, a certain leader of the opposition—a Mr. Brush—spoke heatedly on the points my father had made. My father jumped to his feet and remarked in dramatic tones, 'My Lord, I never gave Mr. Brush a handle to make so sweeping an assertion.' This finished poor Brush, and the debate concluded with an overwhelming majority for my father's side.

One time my father had an amusing encounter in court with a leading K.C. of that time—'Tommy'

O'Shaughnessy. This barrister was notorious as having one of the worst tongues at the Bar, and was a terror in cross-examination. My father was opposing his renewal of the licence of a certain notorious public-house in his parish, and O'Shaughnessy was appearing in support of the application. My father was in the box. The examination ran like this :

'Now, Mr. Dean, you are a well-known teetotaller ?' 'Yes.' 'This public-house is near your own home ?' 'It is.' 'Now, Mr. Dean, have you even been in the public-house ?' 'Yes, I have.' 'Ah, you have ? Gentlemen of the jury, that is a very interesting admission. Now, Mr. Dean, you have been in this public-house. Have you ever taken anything in it ?' 'Yes,' said my father, 'I have.' 'Oh, so you admit taking something in it ? Now, on your oath, Mr. Dean of the Chapel Royal, what did you take ?' My father looked quietly across, first to the judge and then to the jury, and replied calmly, 'I took notes.'

O'Shaughnessy lost his case ; and the pub its licence.

I must tell one more story of my father which I do not think has appeared in print.

He was driving down the quays one evening to catch the North Wall boat. Directly in front of him was another car in which was a clergyman named Jordan, who, it so happened, was well known to my father. As he approached one of the bridges Jordan's horse stopped, jibbed, and started back. My father's driver pulled up, but the car in front continued backing. My father stood up and shouted, 'What ailedst thee, Jordan, that thou wast driven back ?'

One further aspect of social life in Dublin must be recorded—the military. Dublin was an important garrison town ; really, it was more, as Ireland boasted a commander-in-chief. Lord Roberts was the first commander-in-chief that I remember, and his son, Freddie Roberts, who won a thoroughly well-earned

V.C., was one of my early heroes. He was an extraordinarily nice man, kind to every one who came his way. He taught me to skate and used to rag me and pull my leg in a way I (and I believe he) thoroughly enjoyed. The officers of the various regiments entered, of course, into the social life of the city. They became members of the hunts and clubs, and on the whole were an element that contributed toward the gay and irresponsible young life, if not, indeed, toward the intellectual. A few years before the war, General Plumer was commanding at the Curragh, and one of his A.D.C.'s and I became rather good friends. We were both lads of the same age, about three- or four-and-twenty. I was brought by him to dine at the Plumers' on three or four occasions. General Plumer was an excellent host, and made every one at his table feel at ease and comfortable. He never struck me, then, however, as being a man of ability. In fact, in my youthful and arrogant way I put him down for a nice, 'God-damme-where's-the-enemy' type of kind old toy soldier. That I was completely wrong in my judgment, time was to prove. Plumer came through the war with a wonderful reputation. Indeed, he is about the only man of the senior command who seems to have made no blunder. I take off my hat to this gallant English officer and add my humble tribute to the great part he played in the war.

CHAPTER III

ART IN DUBLIN

The Bridge Gallery—Hugh Lane—R. C. Orpen—Lane's Death —Mancini, a great Painter—A Poor Standard of Painting in Dublin—Hone—McIlwaine—J. B. Yeats—Jack Yeats—Dermod O'Brien—Miss Hughes—The Academy—Art Training—The National Gallery—An Irish School—Irish Romanesque—Architecture Generally—The Proper Aim for Irish Artists

THE true story of the Art Gallery proposed to be built as a bridge over the Liffey has never been told. I was mixed up in it from first to last, and it seems worth while to tell it now. Hugh Lane had presented his pictures to Dublin and was actively engaged in finding a suitable site for a modern gallery. The old Turkish Baths in Lincoln Place was one of the many places suggested, and Richard Orpen, then Dublin's leading architect, who was helping Lane in his quest, actually got so far as to make plans for this conversion. This scheme came to nothing. Many of us interested in Lane's pictures used to discuss the possibility of various sites. The actual suggestion of a bridge came from Frank Craig, an architect himself. He wrote a letter to the *Irish Times* calling attention to the many advantages of his scheme. Lane was delighted with it. Richard Orpen was not very keen ; I was opposed to it—mainly on the grounds of the huge cost it would involve. Suddenly Lane appeared with Sir Edwin Lutyens, and shortly afterwards plans of the bridge gallery by that distinguished architect were exhibited in Dublin. A large body of opinion resented

an English architect being brought in, and felt that as Richard Orpen had done so much work in connexion with the gallery he was the man who should design it. Lane had misgivings about this himself, and did, in fact, ask Orpen to act jointly with Lutyens. Orpen, rightly, refused to do so. Had he consented he would have been regarded by many people as a sort of local agent for Lutyens—an undignified position for a man of his status. Several of the committee came to see me, asking me to use my influence (I was then in partnership with Orpen) to get him to consent. I refused, as I resented what seemed to me to be a slight; I felt strongly that he should have the designing of the gallery.

Feeling ran so high, and so many difficulties arose, that Lane dropped his project, and the whole idea was more or less forgotten—one is sure, however, that had Richard Orpen agreed to act with Lutyens, the scheme would have matured. It was a curious irony that Lane killed his own scheme by introducing an outsider, which action offended the national feeling of a large number of his supporters.

Lane had his leg pulled a good deal over the result of his gallery scheme: sometimes in a bitter and sometimes in a kindly way. Conor O'Brien wrote some verses which were sung to the air of 'Allen Water' at an Arts Club show by James Duncan and Sparrow, representing Hugh Lane and the Lord Mayor. They ran like this:

L. M. On the banks of Liffey water,
Where the main drain meets the sea;
That's the very place we oughter
Build our gallery.

H. L. On the site we have selected
All the tramway men may see
An ante-mortally erected
Monument to me.

BOTH. Tho' in muddy waters fishing,
All is fish that we shall get;
All the fish for which we're wishing
Will come to our net.

Although the bridge gallery was never more than a castle in Spain, its contents were a very definite reality. Lane, about the year 1907, when he was just thirty, started the Modern Art Gallery with many valuable pictures of his own and many contributions from others. The King, Queen, and President of the U.S.A. all gave pictures, and many other people of distinction helped him. Apart from the actual gift, Lane presented a further collection of about forty pictures to the Corporation, on the condition that a suitable gallery should be built to house the entire collection. Owing to various difficulties and delays, this latter collection was withdrawn, and placed as a loan in the National Gallery in London. They are at present in the Tate. Lane left these pictures in his will to the Dublin Gallery, but unfortunately the codicil in which this was set out was unwitnessed. Lane went down in the *Lusitania*, and the question of the proper disposition of these pictures has been the subject of heated controversy ever since. In 1924 Ramsay MacDonald's Government appointed a parliamentary commission to report on the whole matter, and this body came to the conclusion that the pictures should be returned to Ireland. The question assumed an almost international aspect at one time, and is still unsettled. It is purely a legal question. No one can have any doubt as to the moral and straightforward aspect of the case. Any decent private individual, presented with the same problem, would return the pictures to Dublin.

The little collection that Lane presented to Dublin was wonderfully perfect. Monet, Manet, Corot, and the best of the modern English and Irish painters were

represented. There was some second-rate stuff, but not very much. A few Irish artists, not of the first class, presented pictures which Lane found it impossible not to accept, but which will probably be eliminated in time. There are two or three good Mancinis, a painter far too little known in England, and who will be regarded as among the giants in a decade or so.

Mancini's methods of working were very individual. He started his career in Italy and at first was niggling in his methods; his paintings were pre-Raphaelite in their meticulous attention to detail. Later, he got broader and broader, and when Lane brought him to Dublin in 1910, he had developed a most individual technique. He used to place his sitter about thirty feet away and place a frame with squares marked off by cords in front of him or her. He had similar cords on the canvas. The idea was somewhat similar to the method used by a scene-painter in working on the full-size from his small-scale cartoon. Mancini used enormous quantities of paint, especially flake white, and I have seen him stuff this on to his canvas without using a brush, and direct from the tube. Whatever his methods, his results were wonderful, and I am certain he will rank among the very great portrait-painters.

He used to do sketch-portraits on black paper, working in red and white chalk; and it is almost impossible to believe that this is all the colour used in these. We had great fun with him one night over one of these sketch-portraits. Lane was very anxious that Mancini should draw Richard Orpen, and plied his glass freely at dinner. After dinner Mancini, as was his way, began to fidget about, and finally decided he would do the drawing. A hasty adjournment was made to his bedroom, and the drawing was done, he being kept well supplied with vermuth. He went to bed well pleased with himself, and the drawing was hastily removed. The next day he appeared to have forgotten all about

the incident, and the drawing hangs—a treasured possession—in a certain Dublin office to-day.

When in Dublin, Mancini painted in a room in the Modern Art Gallery placed at his disposal by Lane. I used to visit him there fairly often, and carry on the most difficult conversations in execrable French—he had no English and I no Italian ; but he was, despite this, far from being inconversable. We usually came to a dead stop after a few minutes, through sheer lack of vocabulary, and then he would paint with frenzy until he had another thought, which had to be brought out, when our ridiculous and mutually ill-understood arguments would begin again. I was in the studio a good deal with Lane when Mancini was painting Mrs. Shine, Lane's sister. This was a masterpiece, and was hung for a long time practically in the place where Mrs. Shine sat during the progress of the painting, consequently in a perfect light. I am not sure if it is there now, or if it was one of those pictures which went to London.

The standard of painting in Dublin at this time was not high. There were a few painters of the first rank, but very few. There were a good many whom one can fairly call second-class, and the majority of the rest were mostly amateurs. The Exhibition at the Royal Hibernian Academy usually contained only half a dozen works of distinction, and perhaps twice that number which were fairly good and could have held their own in a London show. The remainder were of a quality that is to be met in any provincial exhibition.

Among the landscape-painters Hone, in my opinion, stood an easy first. His work is not at all well known, as he rarely exhibited outside Dublin, and little enough there. He painted mainly to please himself, and never cared about selling : even Lane, who generally got his own way, found it difficult to persuade him to sell. He painted rather broadly, and his drawing and colour

were extraordinarily convincing. I do not know how he worked, as I never had an opportunity of seeing him in his studio, but imagine his pictures were most carefully drawn, judging by the skilful way he modelled the forms of his natural features—hills, trees, etc.

Hone will, I am certain, rank with the great masters of landscape, and his work will be prized when many men highly thought of to-day will have been forgotten.

J. B. S. MacIlwaine was another landscape-painter who should be placed high. He started as an architect, but his real talent lay in painting, and though at this time he was turning out but little work, what he did do was very good indeed.

William Orpen, Lavery, the Shannons and the Morrows, of course, exhibited fairly regularly in Dublin, but one can hardly class them among Irish painters of the period, as London had long since claimed them for her own.

Among the portrait-painters one can only think of three or four whom one could call first-rate. I should put J. B. Yeats, senior, and Miss Harrison at the top. J. B. Yeats was a charming and striking personality. With his erect carriage, flashing dark eyes, and white hair and beard, he caught one's attention at once in a roomful of people ; and when he spoke, the musical quality of his voice gripped one. I recollect hearing him lecture on Turner on one occasion, when he spoke for over an hour without notes, and held his audience spellbound throughout the whole of the time he was on the platform. No slight feat. He went to America when over seventy years of age, and achieved considerable popularity in New York and elsewhere as a portrait-painter. His work was amazingly ahead of his generation, and to-day looks fresh and modern. He painted rather broadly, but his modelling was refined to a degree, and he observed his sitter very closely. He painted the character of his sitter, as, of

course, all great artists have done, and not merely a correct representation of features, form and colour.

Richard Orpen, as I have said elsewhere, was, and is, in my opinion, quite first-rate in his own way. He never worked in oil, but his water-colours rank deservedly among the best of his day ; they hold their own in any company. He is at his best in his imaginative, romantic landscapes, and these will be highly valued some day.

There were a good many other artists in Dublin at this time who, although one cannot call them of the first rank, were always spirited and interesting. Among these were several who are mentioned elsewhere in these pages, including Russell, the Markieviczs, Miss Purser, Miss Elvery, Miss Rose Barton and Jack Yeats. Dermod O'Brien, P.R.H.A., was a safe and competent artist who, if he never rose to any great height as a portrait-painter, turned out many attractive and well-observed landscapes. He was a very energetic man, attending to his business as a large landowner and dairy farmer, and his painting never got a real chance, sandwiched as it was, between his other activities.

Among those who used etching as their medium Miss Myra Hughes, whose early death was a sad loss to Irish Art, was probably the best. Indeed, much of her work takes a very high place ; her draughtsmanship was adequate and decided, and her choice of subject always satisfactory for her medium—a quality only too often not found in etchers. She never went too far with her work and knew exactly how to get her effect with a minimum amount of line.

Sculpture in Dublin was almost negligible. Miss Beatrice Elvery turned out a good deal of small work which was very clever and sympathetic ; indeed, her subjects were invariably spirited and attractive. She had great talent, and had she really worked seriously, in my opinion, would have achieved almost any success.

Apart from her, there was no one whom one could, even with the greatest wish to be kind, call other than mediocre.

The Academy, the Water Colour Society and the Sketching Club were the three main exhibitions. The general standard of merit was about the same in all three. A good many one-man shows, or shows by a group of five or six, used to be held, and these were often more interesting than the large exhibitions. The artist in Dublin, however, had a poor time from a commercial standpoint, as the number of those who bought pictures was exceedingly small, and the prices paid were low. I should imagine George Russell sold more than any other painter of this time. It used to be said that he painted a picture or so every Sunday. This may or may not be truth, but one certainly saw a lot of his work dotted about in all sorts of unexpected places.

One does not know how Dublin compares with English towns of similar size as regards supporting its artists—but one can think it would be unfavourably. With few exceptions, the people that could afford to buy pictures went farther afield—local talent in the main was not good enough for them.

The Modern Art Gallery did a great deal to arouse interest in painting, and the small collection got together by Lane materially helped to educate public taste, and, incidentally, for some time to stimulate the purchase of local work. I think, however, the war and the events that followed it effectively killed this interest, and that Irish art is pretty dead to-day. Whether the present atmosphere will be more favourable to art, time will show ; it would be rash to hazard a guess as to the future.

The facilities for artistic training at the time I am dealing with were very poor in comparison to London or the great English provincial cities. The Metropolitan School of Art did its best, and indeed it was here that

William Orpen got his early training, though he subsequently went to Paris. One can argue little from this, however, as doubtless he would have succeeded equally well if he had trained anywhere—it was simply a question of giving him models and letting him draw them. I must say that during my own time as a student in the Dublin School I learned practically nothing, and it was pure waste of energy. The deficiency, I imagine, was half in the system, and half in my own lack of application!

The National Gallery in Dublin, so long under the directorship of Sir Walter Armstrong, is probably the best collection in these islands outside of London. It contains good pictures of nearly every school. It was, however, very little used by Dublin people, and one could wander through its halls and find oneself practically the only visitor. Moore wrote of it somewhere as 'a desert in which occasionally a stray Bedouin appeared on the horizon', or words to that effect.

As a matter of fact, I should think the National Gallery was as much used by Dublin residents as any similar gallery elsewhere—it is a curious thing, how seldom people living in a town, even people of education, do visit their local pictures. Yet the same people, if in Venice or Paris, will spend days in looking at pictures no better or more interesting than those to be found in their own town.

It is difficult to understand or explain this, but it is most certainly a fact.

Amongst others the Gallery contains particularly good examples of Mantegna and Fra Angelico and Goya. It has a good Franz Hals and a Gainsborough which Whistler is said to have thought of very highly. It has one important Rembrandt and several other good paintings by this master. The so-called Titian is, in the opinion of most experts, not a Titian but merely of his school.

There are a large number of very good pictures by the little masters of the Dutch seventeenth-century school, which are justly famous and probably unique.

The National Gallery is at present presided over by a distinguished architect, Lucius O'Callaghan, who has added to its pictures and is to-day playing an energetic part in the world of painting as organized for the nation.

There used to be a great deal of talk about an Irish School and painting in a national way. I never could see how Ireland could produce a school that should differ from that of England. The modern painters at the top are cosmopolitan, and such schools as exist are not the result of nationality but of some strong personality influencing younger people who come into contact with him. Stanhope Forbes is a case in point ; but it would be untrue to say that he is more typically English than many other painters, like say Wilson Steer, who have not founded schools.

Sculpture is probably in the same case, and although indeed a few of the very modern men (like Minhenberg) do seem to have a difference of vision—almost a national one—to others in other countries. These, however, each tend to become an influence in other lands ; thus the cosmopolitan influence continues to increase. It must be so, and it is impossible to think we shall ever have a Dutch or Italian school as these existed in past times.

The language of paint is a common one to Europe, unlike the written or spoken word only understood by few outside its own country.

Ireland can never evolve a national style or school of painting or decoration. It is true, in the latter, and in applied art generally, a few forms, rather definitely peculiar to Ireland in certain phases, are now more used than elsewhere. This does not mean anything more than a difference of detail, and no fundamental

principle is involved. Apart from this the Celt is, in art, mesocephalic.

Turning to the subject of architecture, there used to be a good number of people—one might say a number of good people—who were always talking of development on the line of Irish Romanesque.

The importance of Irish Romanesque and its merit has been greatly exaggerated by most writers. It has certainly many points of extreme archaeological interest, and its origin and source of inspiration still leave room for much research. As a style it is unimportant.

A deliberate attempt to revitalize Irish Romanesque would end in absurdity.

It has been the custom to compare Irish Romanesque with Saxon work in English, very much to the disadvantage of the latter. It has been stated by numerous writers that a school of stone architecture was well established in Ireland long before the Norman in England. This is beyond all doubt a fact, but whether the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries in Ireland were so much more advanced than the Saxon work of the time in England is a question that will have to be reconsidered. There is a good deal of recent evidence suggesting that Saxon work was much more important than has hitherto been believed.

The architecture of Norman, Medieval and Early Renaissance in Ireland is insignificant. It is not till we get to the eighteenth century that it becomes important; then it became extremely important, and the public buildings and domestic work of the time are fully equal to anything to be found in England.

It is rather to a sane development from this that, in my view, Ireland should proceed in her building outlook. The advantage of such development is in the possibility of achieving, not, perhaps, a definite national style, but at least a close harmony between buildings. Design, based broadly on Georgian principles, can be

utilized for any type of building, from town hall to cottage.

It seems to me that this is the sane line for Irish architecture to adopt.

The standard of architectural training in Ireland was fairly good, and the number of first-rate architects practising in Dublin was, I think, large in proportion to its size. Opportunities were less, of course, than in England, and are likely to be extremely meagre in the future. It is difficult to see the youngster of ambition settling down to practise in Ireland. Perhaps this will apply in the near future to all the professions? It is nearly certain that recruits to them must be drawn from a different stratum from that which they have been in the past; whether this will raise or lower the standard of work is a matter of opinion. It may or may not be successful—at least it will be interesting to watch.

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CHAPTER IV

THE ARTS CLUB

The James Duncans—The Renaissance of Art in Dublin—W. B. Yeats—The Markieviczs—The Orpens—G. Russell—M. Joy—A Great Entertainer—A School of Stained-glass—Other Crafts

ABOUT 1906 a small group of people in Dublin came to a decision that there was room for a club which should bring together those interested in Art—using the word 'art' in a wide sense. In actual fact the main spirits in this venture were not artists. The most energetic element was the James Duncans. Mrs. Duncan was a fine pianist and at the same time practised the writing of rather precious essays and critical articles. She wrote cleverly of pictures, but without much knowledge. The jargon was hers, but study she had had little. James Duncan, one of the kindest and most charming souls that ever breathed, knew nothing of art. He was, however, rather unusually well-read in the literature of England and France. Few subjects had failed to yield secrets to him: a more delightful companion it would be impossible to find. As a philosopher, a metaphysician and a logician he was quite outstanding. As a writer of terse English, when his subject interested him, he was unsurpassed among amateurs of his generation.

These two, then, and a few other spirits, decided that they would, as it were, crystallize the renaissance movement then going on in Dublin. The Arts Club was formed—Yeats was in it, the Markieviczs, the

Orpens, George Russell (Æ), and a host of minor lights, many of whom are now more or less well known in their various spheres. Maurice Joy—now a second-rate but popular poet in the U.S.—Patrick Colum, good writer as he was, now, alas! little heard of, and numerous other literary folk all came in.

One or two good musicians were among the original members. P. J. O'Hara, a writer of songs, who will be heard of in the future, although little known in the jazz world of the moment, contributed his quota. After all these people, with many hangers-on, many titled would-be artistic folk among them, had been got together the club was started. Modest premises were taken, with Mrs. Duncan installed as secretary in a flat overhead.

The early phase of the Arts Club was somewhat self-conscious. A simple lunch and dinner were provided, and ten or twenty people used to turn up for these meals and talk of important matters while they ate; and afterwards, over coffee in the smoking-room. Most of these people were middle-aged and not too exciting. Their talk was the rippling of a breeze over still, dark waters, and resulted in a froth that piled up against the weir-gates of the minds of us youngsters who had become involved in the current.

Soon, however, matters took a different course, and the Arts Club developed a social activity and an influence which was noticeable and, as I think, important; not only in the local life of the time, but as a factor in the provincial centres in England and, indirectly, in London.

After some three or four years of rather precarious financial and social existence, during a time when an energetic young barrister with artistic tendencies held the post of treasurer, it was decided to move into more ambitious surroundings, and to take a house in St. Stephen's Green—the centre of Dublin Clubland. The deed was done, and a dinner was held on moving into

the new premises. The following song, written by Frank Sparrow—an architect by trade but a light-verse writer of genius by nature—was sung during the course of the evening :

THE ARTS CLUB CIRCULAR

If you long for things artistic,
If you revel in the nebulous and mystic,
If your hair's too long
And your tie's all wrong
And your speech is symbolistic ;
If your tastes are democratic
And your mode of life's essentially erratic ;
If you seek success
From no fixed address,
But you sleep in someone's attic,
Join the Arts Club, join the Arts Club,
Where the souls do congregate,
Where observance of convention
Arouses fierce dissension :
In the Arts Club, in the Arts Club,
You may sit and dissertate,
If your trousers bag and your coat-tails sag,
You'll probably be hailed as great.

Now although the Club's exclusive,
The hereditary element's elusive,
But the presence at the helm
Of a peer of the realm
To a high tone's found conducive.
There are clever folk who lecture,
There are several who live by architecture,
While the Club is rife
With folk whose life
Is a matter of conjecture.
In the Arts Club, etc.

If you feel a fool, don't show it,
And don't ever let a single person know it,
But join the Club
And pay your sub,

And you'll find yourself a poet;
Don't be a base secessionist—
If a painter, you are bound to be progressionist;
So though it hurts,
Forswear boiled shirts,
And become a Post-Impressionist:
Join the Arts Club, etc.

If your talents are not patent,
But your taste for domesticity is latent;
If you think aloud
In the presence of a crowd
And your voice is fairly blatant;
If you're moved to thoughts symbolical
By proximity to liquids alcoholical,
If a pint of beer
Makes you a seer
Of visions apostolical:
Join the Arts Club, etc.

If for Art you've no utility,
If your mind is somewhat lacking in agility,
You can still have tea,
From half-past three,
In complete respectability;
Don't imagine that you need be boisterous—
There's a regular department for the roisterous—
They pursue their horrid revels,
Down at subterranean levels,
In a dungeon damp and cloisterous,
In the Arts Club, etc.

During these years a pleasant comradeship had grown up; constant dining together, the everyday lunch-hour, and occasional cheerful evenings had developed a sort of unity among a large group of members, not perhaps unique in its harmony, but certainly unique in its striving towards a defined social goal. All sorts of people had been drawn in. The time was ripe for a rich cohesion of ideals. Literature, Art, the Theatre and political adventure were in the air. The Arts Club group gave an outlet to all who were interested in life

and its obvious and obscure reflections. Indeed, by this time, two or three years after its commencement, the club stood for a wide intellectual outlook. Everything was represented. William Yeats was a prominent member ; Jack Yeats played his part ; Percy French, great Irish gentleman and gifted song-writer, and painter of the scenes of our romantic dreams of landscape, was there whenever his work allowed. There were numerous lesser lights. Betty Duncan, now well known in a certain English county as a charming and capable hostess, Conor O'Brien, artist, writer, mountaineer and celebrated sailor ; Frank Sparrow, best of all-round men, and one of the great wits of Ireland of the time, are only a few names that come to the memory. It was a gathering of the talents which will never be beaten, will never be replaced : at least, not in Ireland. I quote two stories to illustrate the atmosphere.

One night at dinner, when there were present Markievicz, Sparrow, Conor O'Brien, and some one whose name and personality have escaped my memory, the talk turned on one Carrie, then a sculptor, now an actor well known in certain parts in London. Carrie's name cropped up. A hasty verse was written to which, I think, every one contributed. Carrie, it must be mentioned, was a particularly abstemious man :

> We had to carry Carrie to the ferry ;
> The ferry carried Carrie to the shore.
> The reason that we couldn't carry Carrie
> Was—Carrie couldn't carry any more.

Impromptu verse-making was brought to rather a fine art, and after the club dinners amazingly clever verses were often produced on current topics. Every one had their chance ; there was no jealousy or no star turn. One entertainment consisted of a song ' Vive la Compagnie ', in which the rapid making of rhymes, with

no time for reflection, was the point. It depended, of course, for its success on the nimbleness of wit of the people taking part. This song was in full blast one night when Yeats happened to be present. After ten or twelve verses of rather high standard had been reeled off, Yeats turned round and said, 'It's marvellous—wonderful. I never heard such rhyming in my life.' One member of the party was subsequently heard to say that this was the only moment in his career in which he took himself seriously as a poet.

Yeats was, in an intellectual sense, the father of the Arts Club. He attended its dinners and discussions pretty regularly when in Dublin. He was extremely good-natured and kind to folk less gifted than himself, and indeed often cast his pearls before swine in an open-handed and haphazard way.

He was very absent-minded, and I remember one night he came in to dinner rather late, and sat down at the table with Sparrow, myself and one or two more, at the concluding stage of dinner. Yeats was full of some subject or another, I have no recollection what, and started talking, regardless of our conversation. He was in very good form that night, and in a short time we were all absorbed in listening to him. As he talked he ate, and finally caught us up at dessert.

Then came a lull in the flow of his talk and he sat up and took notice—he had reached the climax of his argument. He turned round and said, 'Have I dined, or have I not? I have been so absorbed that I don't know.' For a joke, I said, 'No, you haven't dined; you must be hungry.' He turned to the waitress and asked for dinner, which was duly brought, and he went right through the menu a second time. He was tired, I think, and although he talked well (he always does), the second dinner failed to produce the amazing eloquence of the first. I remember, among many episodes concerning Yeats, another rather amusing one.

Sparrow and I were sitting having a drink after the theatre in the Arts Club smoking-room, when Yeats entered. He was obviously dying to talk to some one, and he asked us round to the hotel where he lived (at that time he had no house), and, indeed, insisted on our going. He said, ' I think there is some whisky ; and I know there is some wine.' We went, very flattered, and sat in his room till three or four in the morning, while he talked. Such a flow of talk I have never heard before or since. We made an occasional remark, but conversation it was not. It was a series of brilliant lectures on all sorts of abstractions, mainly of a metaphysical nature. I remember no word of what was said, but I do not think I have ever been so enthralled.

Yeats was at his best at such moments, I think. He is (it is rather absurd to say so) a wonderful lecturer and speaker—few men of modern times have such control over ideas and words—but it is when he is in the company of a few congenial people that he reaches his heights. He talked books away that night for the benefit of his own mind and that of two not particularly well-educated young men.

An entirely different type, but equally interesting in his own way was Percy French.

A great deal has been written about him, and the story of his life, written by his sister, is a fascinating one. His songs are sung the world over, and his romantic water-colours add to the charm of numerous homes. He came of an old Roscommon family, and was trained as an engineer, taking his degree in Trinity. He worked at his profession for a short time, but his native talent soon asserted itself and he turned to song-writing and entertaining. For some time he was associated with Richard Orpen in his entertainments—French giving a talk or lecture, while Orpen did lightning sketches. They were also associated in various journalistic efforts, brilliant, but, so far as I know, not

commercially successful. Richard Orpen had a fund of stories of French's doings, which I used to hear often, as I served my articles to Orpen and was in partnership with him subsequently up to the outbreak of the war. He was the most loyal of friends, and his affection for French and his admiration for his work was unbounded.

I first met Percy French when I was a small boy, when he used to wander into my mother's drawing-room with a banjo under his arm, but I did not know him well till much later on. During my apprenticeship days, about the year 1900, he used to come into our office and demand a glass of water. He would then take it, sit down and proceed to paint. He used to work with his paper very wet, and had the most wonderful control over his colours. Most people working in such a wet medium would have got all sorts of 'accidentals'; not so he; he always, so far as I saw him work, got exactly the effect he went for. It would be perhaps an exaggeration to call him a great painter—but his work had always that quality that can only be called art; it was always full of feeling and romance; and his colour was invariably charming. He had a gift for composition—I have never, among hundreds of his pictures, seen one that was not well arranged and balanced. He painted and wrote at any time, and few men put more energy into their work. He was entirely lacking in all business sense and consequently never achieved the financial success which should have been his. He was a poor man all his life. His first song, 'Abdul the Bulbul Ameer', was written during his university days, and he printed it; he had written both words and music, but forgot to copyright it, and he never received a penny for it.

'Phil the Fluter's Ball' is perhaps the best-known of his songs, although 'The Mountains of Mourne' probably runs it pretty close. They are very different, but equally good. French's songs are extraordinarily

pleasant to sing, but not very easy to do justice to. They require considerable feeling and an intimate knowledge of Irish life. I have never heard them properly sung by anyone other than an Irish singer.

In my view Percy French's entertainments were the best one-man shows of his day. I saw him scores of times, and cannot recollect a dull moment on any occasion while he was on the stage. He could sing to an audience for a couple of hours, and hold them the whole time, and this often with only a banjo, and no other accompaniment. Very few public entertainers are capable of such a feat. It was largely a question of his simple and attractive personality. It always seemed that he assumed everybody liked him and was enjoying his show as much as he was.

Shortly before the war he was giving a show in some fairly large hall, and came on to supper at the Arts Club. He had had a very heavy evening, but did not seem a bit tired. After supper he produced his banjo and sang five or six more songs, and long after midnight was as fresh as paint. He was the heart of that party ; a night that one will always remember.

French lived a most simple life ; he ate little and was practically a teetotaller and non-smoker, rare combination in an artist.

Much of his work, both writing and entertaining, was done in collaboration with Dr. Collinson, and their association continued at intervals up to the time of his death. I think, however, that his best work was done when working entirely by himself. Collaboration must have been difficult for him, as he had such an individual personality.

Among the more distinguished people who used sometimes to come to the Arts Club was William Orpen. He never was an habitué, as he had left Ireland to live in London long before this date. He was then at the height of his skill, and his work was better, I think,

than it is to-day, as he had not yet achieved that slickness in control of paint which, to me at least, spoils his painting to-day. He was working hard and contributed little to the social amenities of Dublin life, and seemed to have not much interest outside his own world of painting.

One of the most regular attendants at the club was Cruise O'Brien, leader-writer for the *Freeman's Journal*, and one of the Plunkett House staff. He never missed the club's dinners. He was an amazing mimic, and used to entertain us with imaginary conversations between two well-known people. He not only imitated their voices very closely, but got right into the mentality of the people he was imitating, his absurd conversation being exactly what one would have expected had his originals been discussing the ridiculous topics he selected. A favourite imitation was of W. B. Yeats and Mr. Commissioner Bailey of the Irish Land Commission. O'Brien would carry on the duologue for eight or ten minutes, and hold a large room full of people absorbed and amused for fully that length of time. Mrs. O'Brien usually accompanied her husband on these occasions. A clever and kindly woman, and a sister of poor Sheehy-Skeffington, who lost his life under peculiarly horrible and tragic circumstances, during the rebellion, at the hand of an English officer.

O'Brien never came to the top: one does not know why. He had apparently every quality that should have brought him, if not literary, at least journalistic success. It may have been lack of application—it probably was: he was always ready to spend hours discussing any obscure question with anyone.

He played the part of 'Tagore' in a club revue written and produced by Conor O'Brien. I think that revue is worth a short note here: it was one of several, but was by far the best. It was during the time when controversy was raging furiously round the

subject of Hugh Lane's pictures and the Gallery of Modern Art. I have told of this elsewhere in these pages, so will not enlarge on it here.

Hugh Lane was the villain of the piece, and was played by James Duncan. The reigning Lord Mayor was played by Sparrow. Cruise O'Brien was Tagore, as has been said. I played Lennox Robinson. Sir John O'Connell, most respectable of solicitors, played Harry Lauder ; though why that music-hall artist was dragged into the plot it is difficult to say.

My appearance was sufficiently like that of Lennox Robinson to enable me to make up very close to the original, and most people thought that I was he, till the last curtain, when we appeared together.

Our accompanists were Sir Hugh Lane and Lennox Robinson, so it is obvious that while there was some pretty strong satire and leg-pulling in the lyrics and book, yet there was no ill-feeling. Betty Duncan, who became a professional with Percy French afterwards, played many parts, including Gordon Craig ; Lady O'Connell, a talented amateur, did likewise, and both achieved a great success in this show.

The periodical dinners were very popular and nearly always entertaining. The usual procedure was to sit on at table and sing. Sometimes an adjournment was made and a hurriedly-planned impromptu play produced. Nearly always some one brought out a new topical song in which prominent people and events were dealt with—severely enough at times ; but, so far as I recollect, always in a pleasant way, and I never heard of anyone being offended, except on one occasion. This was purely accidental. Sparrow was playing the part of the Lord Mayor in the revue I have mentioned, and was made up to look the part very well. Unfortunately he played it with a frightful Dublin accent. It turned out that the Lady Mayoress was present, and as the Lord Mayor happened to speak very correctly,

she, good lady, was much offended. It was duly and tactfully pointed out to her that other people, including Sir Hugh Lane, had been far worse handled and had not taken offence, therefore she must not. This apparently appeased her feelings, and the incident ended happily.

There were many amusing episodes, and what would now, no doubt, be called 'rags'—one of them may bear telling of.

The club had arranged for an exhibition of the, then new, post-Impressionist School. I forget the names of most of the painters, but among them were Flandrin and St. Denis. The exhibition had made a stir in London and aroused a storm of controversy. The pictures arrived in due course, and Conor O'Brien and myself, as members of the committee, were unpacking and arranging them in the studio. We had seen nothing like them before—few people had, at that time—and we were astonished and amused. It was impossible to make out many of the subjects, or at what most of the artists were aiming. We had a bright idea, and, getting out paints and canvas, proceeded to paint half a dozen more. These impertinent forgeries we hung with the real pictures, and nearly every one who came next day to see them was taken in and accepted them. After we had satisfied our sense of humour, we admitted our guilt and removed our absurd daubs. I remember Mrs. Duncan was not deceived, but entered into our rather childish joke and did not give us away.

Among those who came to the club on rather infrequent intervals was St. John Ervine. At that time he was just beginning to be known, although I do not recollect having read anything of his myself till long after. He talked well, with a strong Ulster accent, always unpleasant to us of the South. I notice that he has been writing a good deal on the subject of the correct pronunciation of English, and hitting out vigorously at certain phases of pronunciation as used

in England. He went violently for the so-called 'Oxford' accent. I do not profess to say what is, or is not, a correct accent or where it can be found, but I am perfectly certain it is not in the harsh and unmelodious accents of the North of Ireland, where kettle is 'kattle' and correct 'corract'. Surely, however, if there can be said to be any definite pronunciation which can be called right, it is to be found in the oldest seats of instruction in our mother tongue, Oxford and Cambridge.

That Mr. Ervine should attack these when he himself speaks broad Ulster (unless he has changed since I heard him talking) seems to me to be highly humorous and rather conceited. However, as I have enjoyed his clever and satirical writing on the matter, and owe him a debt of gratitude for contributing many a joyous half-hour to my life, I will say no more.

George Moore was at this time living in Dublin, just around the corner from the Arts Club, but I cannot remember whether he was a member of the club or not. At any rate, people used to drift in and out of the club to and from his house, and he figured in numerous stories and conversations. His *Hail and Farewell* (book on Irish life which in my opinion will live) came out about this time, and, naturally enough, caused a great to-do. This was the first time, so far as I know, that a modern writer had written of his friends by their real names and described true incidents concerning them. Moore gave a great deal of offence, and in one case great pain to an intimate friend of my own ; very great pain. Much that he said was untrue, much was, in most people's view, beyond the bounds of reasonable good taste.

An attractive personality of whom one has very cordial recollections was one Jimmy Meredith—then a rising junior, now a judge with a high reputation. Meredith was the son of a judge, and I suppose had law

in his bones ; otherwise I cannot account for his success at that calling. He was by temperament far more a man of letters or artist than a lawyer.

He was as good a speaker as Cruise O'Brien, and entertained many a dinner with his amazing tales of well-known people. His particular humour took the form of telling a long, solemn story with a rather surprising sudden finish. In his young days he was a great athlete, and held the quarter-mile championship of Ireland for several years, as well as being a running blue for T.C.D. Mrs. Meredith was a sympathetic and cultivated woman—she stands out in my memory as one of the few people in my life who took me seriously as an artist. She and her husband bought a picture of mine which was exhibited in the Royal Hibernian Academy of about 1912. It was a good picture, for me, but pretty bad. If I were more honest I should give the purchase price back.

So far I have not mentioned many women in this book, and must try to put the balance right. Miss Elvery, one of the most interesting people at a dinner or evening, always contributed materially to her immediate circle. Talented as a sculptor and painter, she might have got to the top in either means of expression had she wished. She did not so wish ; she came to be associated with Miss Purser, who was herself a fairly good painter and a public-spirited soul who put her energies, her artistic knowledge into founding a school of stained-glass work in Dublin. Miss Purser, having undertaken this work, to her credit studied the technical side of stained-glass design and manufacture, and turned out excellent work—far beyond anything in the commercial world of her time (except that of the Bromesgrove Guild). I think, however, her work was rather misplaced, and the value of this stained-glass was usually out of proportion to the buildings as a whole to which her craftsmanship contributed.

I must enlarge a little on this. Stained, or painted, glass when it first came into vogue in Western Europe in the early medieval period, was under the control of the designer of the building, and added a pleasant colour scheme in harmony with the main design. A certain shade of blue was its first contribution : there was no effort towards anything pictorial ; it was pure decoration of the main body of the building.

Later, the design of the glass became pictorial and literary and the value as an architectural feature was entirely altered.

As the skill in craftsmanship increased the design became more important, and finally developed into pictures pure and simple : pictures which, indeed, often have no relation to the general harmony of the building. The architecture was ignored, the pictorial effect of the window became the main thing.

This was bad for architecture in its broad outlook ; it was good for stained-glass. Miss Purser, not, apparently, having studied the history of stained-glass, like other people whom I have referred to elsewhere in this book, began in the middle of the argument. She thought that glass of the time, say, about 1900, from an artist's point of view, was rotten.

She was right—it was.

However, instead of beginning at the beginning, where glass was intended as contributing a broad colour scheme in a big architectural effect, she started from the time when it had assumed a pictorial aspect. An entirely natural point of view for one trained as a painter, but entirely wrong, I think, from the point of view of a designer of buildings. This is where the architect and painter break down in agreement : an architect thinks of many different trades in which that of the painter is, no doubt, important. The painter regards all art from his own angle. Exactly the same point of view is found in the plumber, the joiner or the

plasterer. Where fine art is concerned I make no comment—it is a different matter. I am talking here of applied art, such as stained-glass—and applied art as it is immediately connected with, and subservient to, architecture.

I hope the reader who has travelled thus far with me will forgive me this paragraph. It is important to get one's ideas on such matters clearly across the footlights ; otherwise, one may be misunderstood. In my opinion, the pictorial use of stained-glass is rarely justified, and the real function of glass is to add to the colour scheme of a building. I do not say pictorial use is never good art, but that it is rarely so.

Miss Purser's talented assistants and designers, of whom Miss Elvery was chief for some years, turned out work of a very high standard indeed along its own lines ; but in my view the lines were wrong. This is a pity, as one hates to see good work misapplied.

Another interesting experiment in high craftsmanship was carried out by the Misses Yeats at Dun Emeer. They made most beautiful carpets, and their book binding reached a very high standard indeed. I do not know to what extent their efforts to produce really good work in these crafts have been a commercial success, but hope they have achieved their thoroughly merited awards.

The march of Ireland to-day hardly justifies such hopes.

CHAPTER V

THE ARTS CLUB (*continued*)

Jack Yeats—'Theodore'—Irish Mountains—Ernest Julian—Holidays at Pen-y-Pass—An Odd Personality and a Colour Piano—An Interesting Pub—Euphagists and their Lunches—Æ Again—An Able Woman-writer—Leinster Market and another Queer Pub—A Cheap Menu—A Strange Meeting in France—Sir John O'Connell: His Knowledge of Italian Literature—Richard Orpen, a great Artist—A Song of the Arts Club

JACK YEATS, during the years immediately preceding the war, came to the Arts Club a good deal. At this time he was living an extremely secluded life at Greystones in Co. Wicklow; and painting, I imagine, mostly from notes and memory. He gave infrequent exhibitions, which were well attended and at which I think he sold pretty well, as such things went in Dublin, always a wretched place for artists. I shall talk of this in another chapter.

Jack Yeats's pictures of Irish life are too well known to need any description by me. He got the spirit of the West in his painting, as Synge did in his writing, in a way no other artist ever achieved.

He was a most amusing man in his own very quiet way, and had a simple, childlike sense of fun. I used to see a good deal of him, as my wife's mother lived close to his house and, during our frequent week-ends at Greystones, I spent many Sunday mornings with him and his wife.

He had an amusing inmate in his house who contributed greatly to the entertainment of every one. This

was Theodore, an imaginary person, by trade a pirate. Theodore, if I remember rightly, was a joint creation of Jack Yeats and John Masefield at a time when they were sharing a cottage in the west of England. I believe he originated in a dime novel. He was a desperate character who had lived from his early days among pirates, but in his calm moods 'seemed to remember a good home and a kind mother'. This absurd person came into all sorts of daily doings in the household. He figured on the decanter and other vessels in heroic poses, and on one Christmas morning was discovered in the bath, sailing some strange craft containing a present for Mrs. Yeats. The first time I heard of Theodore I was much amused, and went back to lunch and told my wife about him. My story must have lacked something in the telling, for instead of amusing my wife, it irritated her; finally, she said crushingly, 'I can't stand Theodore,' and added, I don't know why, 'Dickens would have hated Theodore.' I, rather surprised, could think of no suitable repartee, and finally said, 'Has it ever occurred to you that Theodore might have hated Dickens?' This ridiculous remark became a family saying, and I expect my daughter will use it in years to come, without having the remotest idea of its absurd origin.

Jack Yeats was an amazing contrast to his brother Willie, but, like all his talented family, was extremely good company when with congenial people. He was sensitive to a degree, and if he did not care for his surroundings, never opened his lips. He was a great believer in Ireland and its destiny and its peasant class; a somewhat unusual point of view for a man of his breeding and generation; for the Yeats were Irish Protestant landlords. His father, a gifted painter himself, was a strong Nationalist, and I presume the younger generation had always had that point of view put before them.

George Russell (Æ) was an original member of the Arts Club, but dropped out fairly soon, it was said because he objected to putting on evening-dress at club dinners. During the early years of the club we ran a Life Class two or three nights a week, and Russell used to turn up regularly and work as hard as any of us youngsters. It was rather amusing to watch him. He worked in black and white or red and white chalk and never tried to draw the model correctly—in fact, of course, he couldn't draw—but made charming sketches and delightful little pictures in themselves, which were suggested to him by the model's pose.

As I have written rather fully of Æ elsewhere in these pages, I will not say more about him here.

The Life Class was great fun. All sorts of people turned up, but not many who were much good. The Markieviczs, Count and Madame, were perhaps the best draughtsmen, and what we learnt was mainly from them. Madame was the soul of good-nature, and was always ready to help and advise others with less knowledge. As a matter of fact, they were both painters of considerable merit, and could both have been really first-rate if they had worked. The never did, however ; their energies were too diffuse to concentrate on painting.

There was a small group of men in the club who were keen mountaineers and climbers, and many expeditions to the hills were planned by these in the smoking-room. Between us we explored all the Irish mountains, a task which took some years to complete, and we wrote an article on Irish mountaineering, which included accounts of all the main groups, and which appeared in the *Climbers' Club Journal*. Most of us had learned our climbing under that great mountaineer, my cousin, G. Winthrop Young, and we used to contribute regularly a strong Irish contingent to his celebrated parties at Pen-y-Pass. James Duncan did not climb, but accompanied us on many occasions, and was always a welcome

addition to the party on account of his excellent songs and general capacity for pleasantly entertaining others.

He objected to climbing, and on the occasion of his first visit to Wales with us, stood in horror while a party tackled a difficult piece of rock. He expressed his disapproval in strong terms. The next morning he was heard to murmur in the hall, after breakfast, 'What time do they go up to-day?' Exactly as if we had been balloons!

Another climbing member, and rather a celebrity in his way, was Edward Evans, invariably known as 'The Bishop'. Evans had an extraordinary career. Trained as a stockbroker, he went to South Africa and worked at all sorts of manual jobs for a year or two. He was very small, but beautifully built and rather good all round at games and sport. After his return from Africa he became exceedingly religious in a fairly conventional way, on the general lines of Anglican doctrine, but with many strange spiritual ideas of his own added, as the result of his real or imaginary experiences. He took a small and isolated cottage at the foot of the Dublin hills, where he lived the life of a recluse, surrounded by books dealing with every religion under the sun. He used to see spooks and tell one of his conversations with them. There was no mere pose about it; he really believed he saw them; perhaps he did. After many gropings after religious truth he, in the end, became a lay-brother of the Anglican Franciscan Order. During the war he joined up and served as an officer in the Gunners, but at its termination went back to his old Order and is still a Franciscan lay-brother, spending his life in wandering round casual wards and other places where the down-and-outs gather. He certainly had the courage of his convictions. Notices of his more sensational doings occur from time to time in the daily papers, and when I meet these accidentally on occasions, they fill me with amazement and give

me many suggestions which are helpful towards understanding the strange vicissitudes of life.

A man who figured prominently in Dublin at the time, and a close friend of Evans, demands in the name of old friendship something more than a passing mention. Ernest Julian, brilliant in his career at the Bar and most delightful and charming of holiday companions, was making his name as fast as a man can at his own calling. As I have said elsewhere in these pages, I have no love for barristers as a class, but Ernest was a personality that would have earned honour and distinction among any group of intelligent people.

He was Professor of Law in Trinity at about twenty-seven, and was one of the finest teachers it is possible to imagine. He always held his classes absorbed, although he spared them nothing of the dull and routine side of their work.

As a companion on a mountain or over the smoking-room fire he had no superior and few equals of his time.

He did not suffer fools gladly : I remember one night at the Arts Club being drawn into a general discussion in which Julian was concerned as a principal. Some luckless curate who had strayed in had put forward some highly controversial opinion as though his point of view concerning it was as truth beyond argument. Julian roused up in his quiet way and slew the wretched cleric in no unmeasured terms. I never saw a man made such a fool of in so short a time. A lady who was present remarked afterwards, ' It was like the booming of big guns against isolated and misdirected rifle-fire.' An apt enough analogy which has remained in my mind ever since.

Ernest Julian was the subject of a somewhat sensational adventure and the cause of a night's anxiety to an hotelful of people during one of our Christmas climbing expeditions just before the war. A party had gathered at Pen-y-Pass for a week among the snow

and rocks, and among this party were two small boys brought up for a holiday by Geoffrey Young. Some of us—Young, Julian, the boys and another Young and myself—started the first morning to do an ascent. The day was bad : the snow lay deep and was still falling. An easy climb was indicated. The Parson's Nose was selected. To achieve speed we roped in parties of two—Geoffrey Young and one boy first, myself and another boy second, and Julian and E. Young last. The first two parties knew the route and the easy descent—Julian and his party did not. We told them, accordingly, to follow our tracks. We made the ascent easily enough and started to come down about three o'clock. We took it pretty fast—it was too cold to dawdle—and got back to the hotel for a late tea, and in time to enjoy the rites of the pre-dinner communal bath : a well-established holiday rite at Pen-y-Pass. Dinner came, but no Julian and Young. Nine o'clock—ten o'clock, still no signs of the wanderers. The law of climbing-centres decrees that if people do not turn up by ten a search-party is indicated.

Accordingly ours was hastily made up, and tired and depressed, we got back into our wet clothes. I pass over the details of that miserable night : the wind howled, the snow fell silently, we toiled up ridge and across the screes, weary and hopeless, and returned about three in the morning, incapable of further effort.

After three or four hours, we started off again. As dawn came up over the Glydders I was toiling up the side of Grib Goch with Conor O'Brien. After some half-hour of steep snow-slope I said, ' Conor, is there any chance of finding these fellows alive ? ' Conor said, ' No ; none.' I had thought over all possibilities and had come to the same conclusion, but, human-like, had hoped for some ray from him.

Suddenly the whirl of snow lifted ; the sun shone on the white expanse of snow and the black of the great

crags all around us. The sound of a horn was heard in the valley below us ; we looked down two thousand feet and saw a figure moving rapidly along the low track at the base. Something was up, clearly. Hastily glissading and tumbling down the steep snow, we reached the track to find Owen, our landlord, seated on a blowing horse, with a coach-horn in his hand. He was in his shirt-sleeves, despite the temperature, and, I remember, bootless. ' It's all right,' he said ; ' they've just walked in.' We went back with him, and I never remember going through a more complete nervous reaction than on our way back to the inn. It turned out, after somewhat incoherent explanation, that Julian had missed our steps, got completely lost, and had spent the night in the summit of Grib Goch under the lee of a rock.

It was an amazing example of what can happen to an experienced man under trying circumstances. The two principals had had numerous seasons in the mountains, both in Switzerland and Wales.

Julian's life was spared on this occasion, but only a short time after he was to lose it in the ghastly campaign of Gallipoli. He was killed as a company commander leading his men ashore from the transport and before he had set foot on that ill-chosen beach. I cannot speak of Gallipoli : of all the horrible, ill-thought-out phases of the war that reflect discredit on those in authority, it was the worst.

Let us pass on from these sad thoughts of wasted energy. Julian was not a member of the Arts Club, but was a frequent guest at our dinners and other entertainments, and always added to the value of the evening. A fine type of Irish gentleman and scholar, sane in mind and healthy in body, one is proud and glad to have called him friend.

Among the early members of the Arts Club was a strange being called Alabaster. As an eccentric and

odd personality he stood out as a prominent figure in certain circles of Dublin life of the time of which I write. He held a position in the Irish National Museum under (that arch-traitor as he has been called) Count Plunket; and was an authority on Japanese bronzes and several other subjects.

Among his many activities, and he had very many, was one in which he sought to bring colour and sound into a definite and mathematical harmony. He invented a piano which, instead of playing notes played colours. His point was that every note had a corresponding colour; and that if a piece of music was played in colour on his instrument the result would give the same melody, the same harmony as if the piano were played in the usual way; the difference being in the result and not in the interpretation. Logically, this seemed reasonable enough, but I always felt there was something wrong: although my lack of musical knowledge forbade my discussing the idea with any precision. I don't know if that piano ever came to anything—but it was a very amusing and frequent topic of discussion when Alabaster was present.

Alabaster had another claim to distinction. He wrote semi-serious letters to the papers on all sorts of subjects—mainly those dealing with ingenious methods to improve the amenities of life. Some were very sound, some hare-brained, all were clever. I got dragged into his wake at times and wrote letters to the papers either for or against his views.

Alabaster left Ireland some years ago, but I see he is carrying on the good work, as his letters appear in the papers still at times. They are as amusing as ever.

Alabaster discovered a quaint little public-house which was the scene of many amusing incidents. We called it 'The Old Bull and Bush', and its seems fitting that it should have a few words devoted to it, and the

part it played in the artistic life in Dublin of the time. It was an obscure public-house with a main entrance into its saloon bar opening into one of the narrow streets giving on to Grafton Street, much as Louden Street and Surrey Street do into the Strand of to-day. It had a flashy entrance into one of these streets, Duke Street, I believe. It had also a back entrance giving on to a small alley. William Orpen used it occasionally during the time he was visiting-professor to the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art ; and used to take Richard Orpen there for lunch—lunch served at deal tables, and consisting of bread-and-cheese sandwiches and most excellent black bock. I was introduced into this pleasant place, and several of us used to lunch there fairly regularly.

During these lunches a sort of habit or custom grew up that no serious subject must be introduced into the conversation. A poem appeared in *Punch* about this time, or an article—I forget which—on this very subject, and referring to such little groups as ' Euphagists '—' those who refused to discuss serious topics at lunch-time '.

I wrote some verses on the lunch-party at ' The Bull and Bush ' which are reproduced here, to explain the atmosphere of the moment :

In a quiet little side street off the City's foaming flood,
There's a charming little spot to sit one down in,
Where the intellect and talent hie them, be it understood,
Quite regardless if proprieties are frownin' ;
When the solar rays in summer shining from the brassy skies
Are reflected in a manner hotly shocking,
There the amateur Bohemians all are wont to ' Euphagise '
And to spend an hour bread-and-cheese-and-bocking.

How delightful, how attractful, just to lead the simple life
And to idle in this dim ambrosial cellar,
And to quaff a foaming beaker, which dispels all worldly strife
And which held against the light is peat stream ' yellar '.

What a spice of sweet adventure causes all to laugh aloud,
What splendid thoughts occur to each great thinker ;
Nor care they half a single jot if from the vulgar crowd
They hear the appellation ' secret drinker '.

How glorious to slip aside from Duke Street's busy throng,
And emulate the ways of Johnny Horner,
And with a hurried glance both ways, not caring if it's wrong,
Dive in and disappear around the corner.
There seated at the festive oilcloth cares are put away ;
It's really most inspiring to commence a
Discussion on a Corot, or the latest Abbey play,
Or abstract points of Emerson or Spencer.

And each of these bock-drinkers may be termed a coming force.
First, one who artist-minds is sternly churning—
Is it necessary to mention who is meant by him ? Of course
A Long Lane, who from his purpose has no turning.
And then there's one who's much perturbed about the little way
The Capital's declining, which disaster
He hopes to stop with flats and things and helping folk to play—
Our premier letter-writer, Alabaster.

And then a noted painter in a really shocking hat,
His arm around the wine-cup loves to linger,
A home-made cigarette is his, and you will notice that
The nicotine has stained his second finger.
Beside him sits a man of squares, and Koh-i-nors and bricks,
Who's quite beyond description by my poor pen.
Enough to say he's up to all the architectural tricks
To do a doting client, R. C. Orpen.

And other kindred spirits, rather dimmer sorts of stars,
Shun restaurants, it's really not surprising,
And wander down that laneway, where they garage motor-cars
To spend a happy hour ' euphagising '.
How pleasant 'tis to sit among the casks and buzzing flies ;
It's really very jolly—what could be more ?
Their souls are simply seeking with some sympathetic sighs
For the brain-inspiring café of our G. Moore.

These euphagists are all of them creators in their way ;
At any rate, they're pretty heavy thinkers ;
So don't apply the term which I have mentioned in my lay—
The unbecoming term of ' secret drinkers '.

And prithee do not pass your hand across your weary head,
Nor smile the smile of *hauteur* and derision,
For all of them are looking for the café, as I said,
Which makes so great a man of the Parisian.

I recollect some entertaining evenings with Æ at 'The Bull and Bush'. George Russell was a most abstemious man, and drank very little. However, after a Life Class, he would at times come round to this pub and have a glass or two of bock. One night it so happened that he and I were alone, and we wandered round to drink our refresher after two hours' strenuous work. Russell was in great form, and when we sat down, started to tell me of a light opera that his great friend Susan Mitchell had written. Many lovers of old Ireland will have a keen memory of this clean-cut personality. Susan Mitchell, excellent writer of both prose and verse, and devoted patriot, will remain ever in the hearts of those who knew her as a gallant and fine person, devoting her whole energies to the cause of her country. I differed profoundly from her in my political outlook, but in my personal regard for her character yield to no one in my admiration.

She wrote light verse with distinction. She had written this light opera dealing with political matters of that time, and had given it to George Russell (they were close and very intimate friends) to read. Russell had an amazing memory, and this night at 'The Bull and Bush' proceeded to recite the opera to me. After his second or third or fourth bock he became eloquent (or more eloquent; he always spoke well and easily), and sang some of the lyrics, stopping now and then to explain the plot and the psychology. He couldn't sing at all, but managed to convey the whole idea in a wonderful way; in a way, indeed, which suggested an account of a masterpiece. A masterpiece I believe it was, but which could only appeal to so small an

audience as to render it useless from the point of view of production.

This pub was the stage for several such scenes, and one recollects many of these with a glow which warms the heart. It was here after a lecture on some art subject that I first met James Duncan, subsequently one of my greatest friends, and who figured so prominently in the life of Bohemian Dublin of the years preceding the war. Jim Duncan is now a respectable Parisian business man; that is, respectable in the French sense. In the Dublin sense of the word he never achieved success: thank goodness for that: and thank goodness for a loyal and lovable friend.

There was another pub where members of the Arts Club used to meet. It was rather an attractive place, with an entrance from that quaint old-world alley, Leinster Market.

There was a little door with the simple word 'Push' on it. No other lettering appeared. On pushing, one encountered a narrow flight of stairs leading to a long, low dining-room, containing ten or twelve small tables. We used to dine here fairly often before going to Life Class or other entertainments at the Arts Club. Dinner was a simple meal and very cheap. It usually consisted of some such menu as this:

A steak or chop	6*d.*
Potatoes and bread	no charge
A glass of draught stout	1d.
Cheese, bread and butter	2d.
Glass of port	2d.

Total, elevenpence, with a twopenny tip to the waiter. No wonder that people could do themselves well in Dublin at that time, and hunt or yacht or go in for any similar sport on incomes that would scarcely have covered living expenses in London. A poor man's paradise, surely.

We called this pub by the romantic name of 'The Hank of Onions', although it bore no such picturesque title. It was in reality No. 27 D'Olier Street; Slattery, or Mulligan, or some such name was over the door.

Years after, during the battle of the Somme, I was in a trench with an elderly subaltern. We talked of Dublin; he had been there once or twice, and he mentioned the pub as the best value he had ever struck in restaurants. He asked me if I happened to know it; and was naturally surprised when I said I did. It was, as a matter of fact, little known, and so far as what are termed respectable people, had no patrons at all. It did a bar business with working-class folk and clerks, and the eating-room was always practically empty. Outside our own group one never met anyone who knew of it; it was curious to meet an Englishman of good birth in the war who had been to it on many occasions.

Among the more conventional members of the Arts Club was 'Jacky' (now Sir John) O'Connell. He has been referred to previously in these pages as playing the part of Harry Lauder in a club revue. He had in reality claims to distinction on other grounds. He was a recognized authority on the Italian Renaissance, and especially so on the history of the Medici family. He spent a great deal of time in Italy, and his lectures, to certain learned societies, on Italian historical subjects were always scholarly, informing, and, more important, interesting. He was an all-round lover of creative art, and his house at Killiney contained a beautiful collection of pictures and furniture. His occasional articles and papers on the social life of the eighteenth century were all too rare. When they occurred there was always some fresh light thrown on some obscure problem, or some new evidence to decide a controversial point.

By profession he was a solicitor, and an exceedingly successful one, and his literary work was squeezed in among the few leisure hours of a busy practice. It was a pity it was not the other way round; his literary work would have been of far more value to the world than his legal activities; at least, to posterity.

Such, alas! is often the case. A man's real creative energy is killed by the stress of his material efforts; and much is lost thereby. This is one of the tragedies of collective life—of civilization as we have it to-day. There are, in fact, thousands of men doing brilliant work as an occasional little bit of their life's output, or capable of doing such work, whose lives are spent in some dull routine, unescapable, which precludes the possibility of their producing what they should produce both for their own self-expression and for the benefit of their fellow-men. It is rather a sad thought; one must be optimistic, however, or rather, one may as well be optimistic on such matters, and hope and believe we shall understand it all some day, either here or wherever the adventure of existence may ultimately lead us.

Sometimes, as one would expect, the functions at the club were not up to its own high standard. One night it happened that one of the Fays, then playing leading parts at the Abbey, was a guest at dinner. On this night no move was made from the table, and we sat around with song and story and recitation. Fay was pressed to do something. One cannot tell what his motive was—whether he was living down to the level of the company or whether he was rising up to it; but, of all things, he chose to recite 'Kissing-Cup's Race'.

I rather imagine he must have learnt this in his young days, before he became the artist he was, and brought it out as something easily done and remembered. The

effect was comic: nobody knew whether to laugh or cry, and the absurd Early Victorian doggerel was received in silence till the end, when natural good manners overcame disgust, and Fay was accorded vigorous applause. One wonders what he thought of it. He must have known the value of what he had perpetrated! Perhaps he didn't: good actors are frequently entirely lacking in literary sense.

One of the original founders of the Arts Club was R. Caulfield Orpen, the best architect in Ireland and one of the best painters. He is elder brother to William, and himself wanted to be a painter, as a young man, but for family reasons became an architect instead. It was a great pity. Richard Orpen had as much if not more talent than his brother, and had he been a painter there is no doubt that he would have got to the very top. The Orpens had painting in their blood, as both their father and mother were amateurs of more than ordinary skill.

Richard Orpen was amazingly quick in both thought and work. He knew exactly what he wanted to do, when beginning a drawing, and did it rapidly, with the greatest economy of labour. An excellent draughtsman and colourist, he is equally successful in water-colour or line or in architectural drawing. I had the good luck to serve my apprenticeship with him and stayed on with him after, subsequently becoming his partner until going to France in 1915. I had fifteen years with him, which is a pretty good test of how you can get on with anyone. During the whole of this time I never heard him say a harsh word of anyone, unless it was thoroughly deserved; and although he did not suffer fools gladly, he suffered them, and was always ready to help the lame dog. His services were always at the disposal of other members of his profession, and they used constantly to come to him for advice and assistance over some point of design.

Orpen was a widely-read man and had a good knowledge of music. He took a keen interest in the theatre also, and was, in fact, as delightful a companion as it is possible to imagine, as his wide knowledge was coupled with a very ready tongue and a keen sense of humour. Although he was very sound in the business side of his work, this aspect bored him, and he was far happier at the drawing-board than at the desk. He was an excellent committee-man, which surprised those who did not know him well, and was always attending some meeting or another; a form of public duty which I did not approve of when we were busy in the office.

His charm of manner and keen wit made him an exceedingly popular person in Dublin, and he was, and is, held in the highest esteem by his own profession, which is, perhaps, the highest test of a man. His influence on my own life was very great, and I count myself very fortunate in having come under it in the raw young days of my early manhood. Richard Orpen was incapable of an action or thought that was not directly honest and straight: no man was ever less self-seeking; no man thought less of himself and more of others. No one was more generous with his praise.

He did not take an active part in the various activities of the Arts Club, except the Life Class. He rarely attended its purely social gatherings; perhaps because most of these were mainly in the hands of a generation younger than his own. Whenever he did come, he was a welcome addition to the party. He was always that, to any gathering.

This chapter may close fittingly, as it seems to me, with a verse of a song written by Frank Sparrow, who has been mentioned previously in these pages. It was written and sung at one of the early dinners, and ran into several verses:

If you long for things artistic,
And revel in the nebulous and mystic ;
If your hair's too long, and your tie's all wrong,
And your speech is symbolistic :

. . . . .

If you feel a fool, don't show it,
Be sure you don't let anybody know it,
But pay your sub, and join the Club,
And find yourself a poet.

CHAPTER VI

THE THEATRE

'The Countess Kathleen', an early Yeats Play—Dublin's Religious Intolerance—The Beginning of the Abbey—The Development of the Art of the Abbey Theatre—Wynne's Bar—Cheap Whisky and Jolly Evenings—Synge's Influence—'The Playboy's' First Performance—Various Theatrical Activities—New Groups of Amateurs—The Queen's Theatre

THE vital theatrical life of Dublin began long before the recognized movement of the Abbey Theatre.

It began with Yeats's play, 'The Countess Kathleen'. This little masterpiece of dramatic art, although written when Yeats had no experience of stagecraft, stands out as a clear-cut cameo which one feels certain must live. It is so simple in its essentials, so poignant in its psychology, so entirely human. It is far ahead of most work produced to-day.

Since the war, indeed, taste has sadly deteriorated. The artistic and poetic outlook is mainly rather self-conscious and degenerate: the younger generation (who missed the war) seem to have little restraint or discipline; and an outlook comparable to that one finds in all such periods in history, an outlook without balance, without due regard to the great facts of life. It will take two or three generations before Europe gets back to a sane and purposeful aim in art or anything else. I am not condemning modern youth—far from it—I am regretting for them that they happen to live in so difficult a period as that of modern civilization.

Some young people of to-day, living quiet and unostentatious lives, are living extremely well, and set us of an older generation a fine example of what life should be. We all know such in our immediate circles who are a constant source of courage and inspiration to all around. Most modern youth, however, is so concerned with material matters as to preclude spiritual and intellectual endeavour.

The artists of Yeats's generation, so far as my understanding goes, were more thorough. If I read Yeats as he wrote in his young days, and the moderns, I find in the one a spirit of courage and hope and a personal dignity; if I read the post-war people of his ability, I find shirking, no outlook helpful to anyone, and no sense of dignity of the individual. The war, perhaps, has caused this, though not alone. 'The Countess Kathleen' was a remarkable play. It created a sensation in a small way; and was greeted in as hostile a manner as 'The Playboy' in later years.

I will not bore my readers with a second-hand account of it. Every one should read it for themselves. It was produced and played by a company of amateurs about the year 1896, perhaps a little later.

It was the beginning—the father and mother too—of the Abbey Theatre.

The plot dealt with an impoverished family, deeply religious by training and by nature. The leading part was played by Val Grace (now Sir Valentine Grace). During one scene, the family were discovered sitting round a miserable fire in a squalid cabin, starving, and with tragedy overwhelming the whole of their lives. The man in his misery, good Catholic though he was, driven to desperation, blurts out the words, 'God and the Mother of God are asleep.'

Some inkling of these lines had got out beforehand, and the devout Catholic element, which years after tried

to wreck ' The Playboy ', had gathered in force to try and assert their views, and to stop the utterance of what they, no doubt good people, considered blasphemy. Some others, either friends of Yeats or lovers of freedom of speech and of art, had got together a large group in the audience determined to support Yeats. I was among the latter. I had not, so far as I remember, heard much of Yeats before, but Val Grace was a friend of my elder brother and, naturally, we were determined to support him.

The night arrived—the play was produced ; the dreadful lines were said. The hysterical element rose and hissed, the supporters rose and cheered ; and hell's hullabaloo was raised. We won easily. ' The Countess Kathleen ' ran successfully, and was regarded as a work of art, and not as a piece of religious propaganda : the attitude from which, alas ! too many things are regarded in Ireland.

If and when Ireland disregards her religious intolerance, she may begin to rank as something that counts. Ireland's whole history has been largely concerned with religious bigotry. No one can say which are the worst offenders, Protestants or Catholics. However, as I am dealing with the Theatre in this chapter I must not discuss this point of view further.

It was during the pre-war years that the Abbey became an institution in Dublin. The Theatre was formally opened with an At Home at which its founder, Miss Horniman, acted as hostess.

The Abbey became successful at once from the standpoint of artistic and intellectual production ; although, I imagine, its financial struggles were pretty acute. Yeats and Lady Gregory had gathered together a very able collection of amateurs—they all were amateurs at the beginning. These included the brothers Frank and Willie Fay, Sarah Allgood and Maire O'Neill and Fred Sinclair. I think Lennox Robinson came in later

as manager: he may have been one of the original group, but I do not so remember him.

I think the Abbey players were at their best about 1911 or 1912. At this time they still had a freshness that wore off as they got more experienced.

The whole development of the art of the Abbey was a curious one; it is rather difficult to analyse. Certainly the company was at its best in peasant plays: indeed, I do not think they were at all successful in the other things they attempted. The Abbey developed a sort of picturesque language, based mainly on Synge's plays. This was not really true to life. No doubt any of the individual sayings in any of Synge's plays was one which might be met with any day in the out-of-the-way parts of the country: yet one could not imagine real people carrying on conversations in Synge's language. Perhaps this does not matter—probably it does not—as on reading or seeing one of his plays most people are completely absorbed, and the unreality of his language is never obtrusive.

Synge had a great influence on the other writers of his time, whose plays were produced in the Abbey, and on the Ulster players also. Lady Gregory and Yeats worked, of course, on lines of their own, but one cannot but feel that Lady Gregory owed much to Synge: without him she would not, I think, ever have produced as good work as she did. This is only the opinion of an observer and not given with any inside knowledge; but I have seen practically all of the plays of both dramatists, and that is one's impression.

'The Playboy of the Western World' is probably Synge's best play, although 'The Shadow of the Glen' runs it close. It is almost impossible to compare a three-act comedy with a one-act tragedy; and, besides this, the construction of the two plays is totally different. 'The Shadow of the Glen' certainly reads the better of the two. 'The Playboy' would not be read easily

except by those who had an intimate knowledge of Ireland ; although it gets across the footlights to any audience. When ' The Playboy ' was first produced, it created nothing short of an uproar. The strict Catholic-Nationalist-intellectual element that patronized the Abbey were shocked to the bottom of their worthy souls at some of the lines. I was there with my brother on the first night, and remember it very distinctly. The audience got restive early in the first act ; and soon the players could not be heard for the din. They went on, pluckily enough, though a section of the audience got threatening. Yeats came out before the curtain between the acts, but was howled down before a word he said could be heard. Hugh Lane was active in trying to quell the disturbance.

The climax was reached in that exquisite love-scene between Christy Mahon and Pegeen Mike. Christy says, ' I squeezing kisses on your puckered lips till I'd feel a kind of pity for the Lord God in all ages sitting lonesome in His golden chair.' This innocent and very human line roused the critics in the house to a positive frenzy. They rose and yelled themselves hoarse for some minutes, and the play never had an uninterrupted hearing of more than a minute or two till the final curtain. Some line concerning a girl in her shift roused nearly as much hostility. It was all extraordinarily childish. There were all sorts of Press criticisms, and letters appeared denouncing Synge as a traitor and traducer of his country. He was also hailed as the greatest playwright since Shakespeare. Both views were, probably, exaggerated. Many people of the hostile section said that Ireland was the kindest and purest country in Europe, and that a character like Christy could never be tolerated, let alone hero-worshipped, as he was in the play.

Subsequently the play was given many times in Dublin with little or no interruption, exactly as it had

been first played. Yeats refused to have a line altered. It has since been successfully produced all over England and in America, and is, I should say, the most important of the early plays of the Abbey.

The love-scene between Christy and Pegeen which I have already mentioned is a wonderful piece of convincing writing. The way in which the timid little man, under the stimulus of his racing success and Pegeen's admiration, rises to heroic and poetic heights is an amazing piece of psychology. One can see this scene a dozen times, and it thrills one as much at the twelfth time as it did at the first.

That night Joe Hone, Sparrow and I adjourned after the play, and somebody suggested writing an account of the evening. We did so, and a pamphlet was produced and finished next day which took the form of a parody on the *Arrow*, the journal of the theatre edited by W. B. Yeats. It was illustrated by Richard and William Orpen, and the original cover represented Erin leading an Irish wolfhound: our cover, Mrs. Grundy restraining Synge.

During the four or five years prior to 1914 the Abbey was a regular institution, and everybody who had any claim to an appreciation of what is good in dramatic art followed its productions regularly. On the whole they attained an astonishingly high standard. I can remember very few plays that were not interesting. On one or two occasions, however, plays were given which were utterly unsuitable to the actor's technique: one such was 'The Doctor in Spite of Himself'. It was absurd to hear eighteenth-century French nobles talking with Irish brogues—all the company, naturally enough, had strong Irish accents—and this spoiled the whole effect. This play did not run for long: I imagine Yeats and Lady Gregory realized how unsuitable it was. 'The Showing Up of Blanco Posnet' was not successful either, and it is difficult to see how and why Shaw came

to write it. It was not passed by the censor in London, and many people will remember the fuss at the time in the London Press. I forget the date, but imagine it was about 1909. It was produced at the Abbey soon after, and the announcement of its production roused keen interest in theatrical and literary circles in England and Ireland.

All sorts of papers and reviews sent special critics to Dublin for the first night, and it was said that German, French and American papers were represented, though with what truth I do not know. I thought it would be better fun to do a notice of a Shaw play, especially one that had failed to pass the censor, and arranged to represent the *Outlook*. The editor gave me a free hand, and I went to the theatre prepared for a thrilling evening. It was, instead of thrilling, most disappointing. The play, in my view, is a poor one, and fails to hold the interest. Moreover, as the scene is laid in America, the Abbey players had the difficulty of struggling with an American accent. They started well enough, but as they got worked up, rapidly dropped into good Dublin. I forget what I wrote for the *Outlook*, but it was generally to the effect that the play taught the same lessons, and was constructed on the same lines, as the old-fashioned Adelphi drama. Moreover, it was dull. I do not suppose Mr. Shaw reads criticisms of his plays—if he did happen to read mine, I imagine he was amused.

The Abbey had one serious fault : it had no bar. If you wanted a drink you had to cross the street, go round the corner and get to a public-house—'Wynne's', I think, was its name. It was a sort of third-rate hotel, with a big saloon-bar full of commercial travellers and other such folk. The company assembled in the bar used to stare when three or four of us entered clad in dinner-jackets. I have recollections of running across greasy tram-lines and muddy pavements (and Dublin

mud is muddy), with the collar of my evening coat turned up against rain. However, the whisky at 'Wynne's' was excellent, and in those days remarkably cheap, and a round of 'small ones' with three or four companions was a very trifling matter. You could buy a 'Baby' Power for sixpence—this was a small sealed bottle of Power's whisky containing enough for two drinks. In ordering this whisky you were certain of its quality. The same amount of liquor to-day would cost about half a crown, with little or no guarantee of its quality. No wonder pre-war Dublin was the best place in Europe to live in.

Quite apart from the Abbey, Dublin was always engaged in matters theatrical. It had numerous suburban dramatic societies, and it contained three theatres and two music-halls. Each of these had its very distinct atmosphere. The Royal, one of the finest theatres in these islands, and an enormous place, was run on Hippodrome lines for some time prior to 1914. Here one might see Little Tich, Harry Lauder, Wilkie Bard and the other leading English comedians any week one wished. It was similar to any good London show on these lines; but the seats were half the price of those of a London show. The Gaiety usually staged plays of the best sort of show, by Pinero and the other popular modern playwrights. The Shakespearian actor-managers, Benson and the like, always played here. The Moody-Manners Opera Company had a season there each year.

Many plays were tried out in Dublin before being put on in London; one always heard it said that Dublin audiences were extremely critical, and that if a play succeeded in Dublin it would be certain to go in London. I do not know how much truth there may be in this, but it was a common belief in Dublin. I dare say it is not true, and that Liverpool and Manchester, or, for aught I know, Wigan, say the same thing. It may be a

harmless piece of provincial vanity. The old Queen's Theatre (of loved memory) was on entirely different lines to its more imposing rivals. It usually gave strong melodrama or Irish plays of the old school—' Con the Shaughraun ', ' Arrah-na-Pogue ', were among two of the best dramas—excellent fare they were. In a certain play the large doors at the back of the stage were thrown open, and the lane at the back of the theatre was exposed. The scene depicted a country dance, and the guests arrived on real outside cars in the lane, and entered through the large door. At the other side of the lane were certain buildings of Trinity used as students' rooms. During the run of this particular play the undergraduates, whose windows overlooked the large door into the stage, had a great time. When the door was opened in the dance scene, the undergraduates used to hurl all sorts of missiles across the lane on to the stage. On one occasion my mother was taking some of my brothers and myself to see this play. This happened to be mentioned at tea, at home, when a certain undergraduate was present. He volunteered to throw some special object on to the stage for our edification. My mother asked for a cabbage tied up in pink ribbon.

During the performance that night we could hardly contain ourselves till the dance scene came along. The big doors were opened, the real outside cars drove up, the guests entered ; when suddenly a huge cabbage tied up in pink ribbon bounded from nowhere on to the stage ; our delight was intense : it was a great adventure, in which H. had played an heroic part. I must not disclose H.'s true name. He is to-day a distinguished Church dignitary, and likely to be a bishop in the near future.

The Dublin music-halls were both good, although there was nothing specially Irish about them. One could see most of the London stars at one or the other during the course of the year.

Dublin was a great centre for amateur acting, and numerous dramatic societies flourished. At the period of which I write, the Players' Club was the most important, and performed many good plays, both original and otherwise. Arnold Graves was the first president, and took an active part in many of the plays produced. He was a brother of Alfred Graves (author of 'Father O'Flynn', the best-known, perhaps, of all Irish songs), and of C. L. Graves, well known in London's literary world. Arnold Graves was himself a good writer, who, had he devoted more time to it, would, one can believe, have come to the top. His nephew, Philip Graves, has to-day rather a high reputation in literary circles. I only remember meeting him once, and that was in Constantinople during the time of the Young Turk revolution. We were both there in the capacity of special correspondents. I remember he gave me a lot of useful information, although, indeed, I think we talked mainly of Dublin. The Players' Club, while consisting mainly of amateurs, often enjoyed the services of professionals, among whom Charles Maunsell was prominent in certain productions. At that time he was a Shakespearean actor, but played extraordinarily well in light-comedy parts. Of recent years he has been playing frequently with Godfrey Tearle.

The first play given by the club about the year 1905 was Sheridan's 'Critic', and it was received coldly. I do not wonder, as it is a most confusing piece of work (a play within a play is a most complicated thing to handle), and few of us who took part in it understood the whole action until the time of the dress-rehearsal—some not even then. I played Sir Walter Raleigh, and enjoyed mouthing the sonorous lines given to him by Sheridan. It was great fun, although the audience didn't seem to think so. 'The Man of Destiny' was one of the great successes of the club. I forget who was cast for Napoleon at first, but he got ill before the first

night, and Arnold Graves, who was producing it, had to jump into the breach, and played the part himself at the last minute. He played it amazingly well, and got a series of good Press notices in the Irish papers.

The theatrical world in Dublin, about the year 1910, was invaded by a new group of players, the leader of whom was Count Markievicz. He has been mentioned many times in this book, but he was rather a dominating personality, and keeps cropping up in my mind in all sorts of unexpected places. Madame was a good second to him, and in later years, so far as Irish and English politics are concerned, has entirely eclipsed him as a person who stands in the limelight. As a matter of fact, there is no comparison between the two personalities. He was not at all self-seeking or egotistical; he was philosophical and calm, regarding life, except for his numerous love-affairs, from an outside and aloof point of view. Madame was his exact antithesis. She had to be in every picture; if not, the subject bored her.

'Cassie', as his friends called him, had had a rather interesting career. Called to the Bar in St. Petersburg when a youth of two- or three-and-twenty, he, by some stroke of fate, was instructed with the defence of a peculiarly brutal murder case: he got his man off, and immediately achieved a reputation. He loathed his profession (and, knowing him as I did, I did not wonder at this), and returned to his father's estate near Warsaw, to announce his intention of giving up law and following art as his real objective. The usual family quarrel (the clash of the generations) followed, and Cassie was cut off with a paternal curse and went to Paris to study art, living, I imagine, on some small income inherited from his mother. He achieved some success remarkably soon—he was a clever painter—and was getting into his stride well enough at about the time he met his second wife, Constance Gore-Booth; she was an

art-student in Paris at the time, and they had a host of common interests, and doubtless, mutual attraction. They were married, and returned to Ireland, in their view a field ready for pictorial conquest.

Cassie at this time could speak little English ; indeed, during the years I knew them well, about 1911–1914, they naturally talked French to each other ; but, like many Russians and Poles, his slang phraseology was up to date in the extreme.

As an example of this a story was told of his first visit to his father-in-law's place, ' Lisadel ', Co. Sligo. Lisadel is a fine Irish country house, with an avenue five miles long. One remembers being wearied to tears while driving up it as a child.

During Cassie's first visit it rained and rained, and a large house-party had been thoroughly bored for a week. One afternoon they were gathered in the drawing-room, and Lady Gore-Booth, I presume in the way of making some sort of activity, said, ' Casimir, do go over to the window and see if the rain has stopped.' Cassie did as he was bid, and found it was still raining as it only can in the West of Ireland. He turned round and said in his deep and sonorous voice, anxious to air his colloquial English, ' It's rainin', rainin' like blue hell.' I have been told that the effect on the assembled good dowagers of Co. Sligo was electric. At any rate, Cassie confined his social activities mainly to Dublin after this visit. His Russian methods were too liberal to achieve success in the society of the West of Ireland, where social life, among the old families at least, was the most amazingly conservative and conventional thing that could be imagined.

Hence the obvious reaction, the inevitable reaction of Constance Gore-Booth and many more. Their families drove them to drink, as it were.

I find it difficult not to write of Cassie and his life in connexion with many topics, but as the chapter

is on the Dublin Theatres it is necessary to curb one's pen.

Cassie got the idea that he was a playwright, and started, with the aid of a case of whisky, to write plays. It would be untrue to say that they had no good points ; they had. But they were so hastily written, so ill-produced, and badly cast, that they were doomed to failure before the dress-rehearsals were done with. Moreover, Madame always played leading lady, and as she could not act, had a poor stage presence and an indifferent speaking voice, an additional handicap was added to Cassie's success as a playwright. As I think, most of his plays had merit ; some, indeed, great merit. His plots were ingenious, and although in his dialogue he was handicapped by writing in a language he had not thoroughly mastered, yet his psychology was good : his people were real—they lived—they were not puppets. If he had worked in collaboration with an experienced author and producer, and had had a decent company, I am convinced he would have been among the successful dramatists in London of to-day. So much for lack of method.

Madame, as I have mentioned, insisted on playing leading lady. She had some talent, but could not at this time make up to look a young part. There was perpetual wrangling at rehearsals. Some of the company were amateurs, the remainder that dreadful thing, amateur professionals. The sort of semi-professional that works at clerking, or some such commercial undertaking by day and who at night goes out to concerts and dinners and sings one or two, or a dozen songs, or does some other thing, for any fee he can get : sometimes only for a free meal and free drinks. Dublin was full of these people, and Cassie got together a remarkable collection from this undesirable conglomeration of duds.

He was his own stage-manager, and used to argue violently with Madame during rehearsals. One evening

she was in the middle of a scene in which she (as the wife in the play) was telling her husband she was leaving him for love of another man ; she overplayed the scene grossly, and Cassie interrupted, insisting it should be taken quietly. She argued the point, while the remainder of the company and the stage-hands listened, greatly intrigued. She insisted that a woman telling such a thing to her husband would, of necessity, be highly worked up, and would do so in an extremely emotional way. Cassie waited until she had finished, and then remarked, ' Constance, you are quite wrong ; when my first wife leave me, she come to my room and say, " Casimir, I leave you ; I love another ".' The company laughed, Madame collapsed, and the rehearsal proceeded on the lines the author wished.

I don't remember much about that play : the main point that sticks in my mind was that in the second act there was a real donkey, or pony, on the stage, which behaved in a way that took everybody's attention effectively off the dialogue.

Before the Markievicz element came on the scenes, another group had played successfully enough on and off for some years in Dublin. This was Valentine Grace's company, and he had served an apprenticeship with Tree and been through the mill. Val Grace was a really fine actor in dramatic parts. He confined himself, rather wisely, to plays that he knew were popular in Dublin and the Irish provinces, and never took the risk of bringing out new or original productions.

His companies, recruited goodness knows where, were capable enough, and knew their business well within the limitations imposed by their social status. Sometimes the leading lady let her part down by an ill-pronounced word, sometimes a principal would make some obvious error in deportment. There was a tale told of an Irish gentleman in one play who had occasion to drink a glass of champagne, beginning by blowing the froth off it,

while he remarked, 'This is a lovely wine.' But I do not know if this is true.

One such tale, however, I can vouch for, and overheard the remark myself. In this play the leading lady played the part of the châtelaine of a large country mansion. Soldiers under an officer (it was the period of the eighteenth century) were searching the house for a political prisoner. They came to a certain door, and the lady had to protest. She did so with dignity. 'But,' said the officer, 'why do you object? Why can I not enter?' She, with great dignity and outstretched hand, said, 'That, sir, is my sleeping-chamber,' and started to make her exit through the selfsame door. Unfortunately, it stuck; she pushed it, she pulled it, but budge it would not. Her feelings got the better of her, and, wild with rage at her ruined exit, the lady cried, 'Open that God-damned door!' I was on the other side, as it happened, and did so, and she fell into my arms, incoherent with rage. It took several bottles of stout to calm her sufficiently to make her entrance in the last act.

Any account of the Dublin theatrical world of the years of this time would be lacking in proportion without some reference to that good lady, Mrs. Glenville, of the Queen's Theatre.

Mrs. Glenville was really chief dresser to the Queen's, but this was a ridiculous misnomer; she was, in fact, assistant stage-manager, property-man, prompter and general adviser, stout-controller, and, indeed, mother and father to all in the theatre. During the season of the Irish plays such as 'Con the Shaughraun' she played the old-woman parts, and right well she did them. She was so sure of her laughs that it was at times difficult for the other actors to carry on; but she did hold the stage in a particularly emphatic way. An immense woman, with a forearm like a leg of mutton her voice, manner and appearance were perfect. A

well-known character and regarded with affection by all who knew her, Mrs. Glenville dominated the Queen's Theatre for three or four decades, and, for all I know, does so still.

She was the mother of Shaun Glenville, well known in London and the provinces in England to-day, husband of that dashing pantomime principal boy, Dorothy Ward.

During the immediate pre-war days one or two old-fashioned 'fit-up' shows used to wander by road from town to town with repertory companies, playing melodrama or variety entertainment, according to the estimated taste of the audience in any particular place.

'The Murder in the Red Barn', 'Alone in London', and such fare was presented. Delightful they were. I never missed an opportunity of seeing those jolly visitors; and some of the most entertaining evenings of my life have been spent in their tents.

One such show stands out particularly clearly in my mind. This was at Rush, a year or two before the war. The night was dark, the rain was descending in torrents; the youth of the town thought it a good opportunity to force a way in without paying. The lady at the door thought otherwise. Armed with a heavy cart-whip, she took her stand in the trodden-down mud beneath the glare of a kerosene flare at the tent entrance, and lustily laid about her with her whip when the more adventurous spirits ventured within its radius. She kept them back successfully, and as the curtain was about to ring up, hurried in, fastening the tent door behind her. The curtain rose, and as if by a miracle she of the whip appeared as the leading lady in an *ingénue* part, keeping tryst with her lover in a garden. She was middle-aged and stoutish, and probably the mother of many, yet she went through her part so well that one could not laugh at her. It was a gallant performance by a gallant soul striving to live against

odds that would have put most of us down and out much earlier in life.

I talked to the company afterwards—we drank stout together (their stout, not mine), in a sort of lean-to shack at the back of the stage—and I learned a little of their lives. Brave, jolly people, after these years I admire you and your simple, kindly outlook on life.

May we all face its difficulties, its sorrows and its repressions as cheerfully and bravely.

CHAPTER VII

LITERARY AND OTHER PERSONALITIES

Plunkett House—Its Importance in Dublin Life—'The Hairy Fairies'—Edward Stopford and Pleasant Dinners—Avondale, a Beautiful Wicklow Retreat—The Parnells—'Pat', a Remarkable Writer—His Books—*The Peasant*, a unique Newspaper—The *Shanachie*—John Healy and the *Irish Times*—The Gaelic League and the Language Movement—The Importance of the Literary Movement in Dublin of this Time—George Moore—James Stephens and Æ—Pat Colum—Katharine Tynan—Lord Ashbourne

PLUNKETT HOUSE has been for many years one of the most important factors in Irish life. It is officially the home of the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, but it is a great deal more than that. George Russell edited *The Homestead* from its rooms, and every one who goes to Ireland from any part of the world in search of information finds their way there. It is one of the fine old Georgian houses of Merrion Square, and was presented to Sir Horace Plunkett some years before the war by his friends and admirers, as a token of the esteem in which they held his life-work—the improvement of Irish farming and rural life. George Russell's room was worth a pilgrimage. As every one who has read his poems knows, he was a close friend of the fairies and the 'Sidhe', and he decorated the walls of his room with paintings of these ancient Irish immortals. Some day this room will be regarded as one of Dublin's priceless treasures: and the paintings on its walls be reproduced, no doubt, in all sorts of ways. It was a strange setting for the editor

of a journal devoted to agriculture ; but more strange was the fact that a person of Russell's temperament should be engaged in such a task.

A curious feature of Plunkett House was that all the men who worked there were remarkable for the amount of hair on their faces. Sir Horace Plunkett wore a beard, Anderson, the Secretary of the I.A.O.S. did also ; Æ wore the most concealing beard that can be imagined ; one could form no idea at all of what his face was like. Edward Stopford, brother of Mrs. J. R. Green, had a small beard ; and Harry Norman, although only graced with a moustache, had a tremendous shock of wiry grey hair which he wore very long.

That entertaining journal, *The Leader*, once, in a moment of flippant inspiration, referred to George Russell and his colleagues as ' the hairy fairies of Plunkett House ', a title which stuck ; and one frequently heard this little group of enthusiasts so referred to by the irreverent.

Edward Stopford and his wife entertained a good deal during the three or four years preceding the war, and their frequent dinners were always delightful. They had two sorts of guests, the first consisting of people of their own class, the second in which their guests were selected from among any folk who, they thought, would be entertaining to each other. When Edward Stopford invited a guest to one of the latter type of dinners, he invariably added, ' We don't dress on these occasions.' The atmosphere was intensely national at the Stopfords' house : in fact, I imagine I was about the only one of those who went there frequently who was a Unionist.

Patrick Colum used to be a guest fairly often, and excellent company he was. Yeats once remarked that Colum was ' socially difficult ', but I never found him so. His manners were, perhaps, a little vehement, and at times he was prone, like many clever young men, to

lecture rather than to converse ; but this is a common fault of youth and one which is not confined to budding Irish poets.

Although Plunkett House was in Dublin, it spread out its tentacles all over the country, and was in touch, through its organizers, with the most remote parts of the west. It was active everywhere, but in some ways is specially associated with Co. Wicklow. Wicklow is perhaps the most beautiful of Ireland's counties, although lacking the sensational scenery on its littoral that one gets in Kerry and Donegal.

Many beautiful old places are scattered throughout the valleys and among the foothills, and among the most attractive of these is Avondale, the home of the Parnells. Avondale is now, alas ! an agricultural college. It was Charles Parnell's home during his parliamentary career—here he used to retire to recuperate after a hard session, and many of his schemes were planned within its Georgian walls.

Avondale is one of the loveliest places imaginable. It lies high on the slope of the wooded valley of the Avonbeg, most romantic of rivers, which, joining the Avonmore just below Avondale, forms ' the meeting of the waters ' immortalized in Moore's verses. As a young man I spent many happy days in and around Avondale with John Parnell, Charles's brother, and took many a trout from the river.

Crag and steep slope and dense woodland are mingled here, with always glimpses of the rushing river, an almost continuous rapid of four or five miles where it passes through Avondale. Here one meets to perfection those skies of Ireland whose soft tones have been the subject through the years of artist and poet.

Accompanying these beautiful sights is the musical note of the rushing waters as they pass over their rocky bed.

John Parnell occupied this setting with considerable

grace. He was a distinguished-looking man with a fair beard and fine features, and over six feet in height. He had the same eyes as Charles, the eyes of a visionary, but lacking in that quality of practical vision of his brother. The most gentle and lovable of men, he was too childlike and simple in his philosophy and attitude towards his fellow-humans to achieve any sort of material success. Yet every one loved him. Surely, indeed, a better mark of real success than any material achievement.

This story may illustrate John Parnell's attitude to life. He told it to me one evening, after a day's fishing, walking home in the glow of the soft yellows and reds of a Wicklow sunset.

'It is quite easy to make money,' he said, 'if you wish to. I went out to Florida and saw how they made fortunes out of growing peaches. It's quite simple. All you do is stick some peach-stones in rows in the ground, and in five years' time you come back and find the trees grown up, and you pick the peaches. Well, I did this; but when I came back, some other feller had picked the peaches.'

Poor John! And it was thus with him through life: some other fellow always picked his peaches.

Avondale was bought by friends two or three times for John Parnell so that he could end his days in his family home, but always he got into difficulties and the old place went; finally to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Education, or whatever the exact title of that branch of the Irish pre-war Civil Service happened to style itself. I certainly forget, and it is not of sufficient importance to write a letter to some one who could put me right on its exact title. Another story of John Parnell seems to fit in here.

During the early stages of the war I was stationed as a junior officer in Dublin. A young nephew of my wife's was home on leave from his job as a staff-captain in

Liverpool—Archie McTier. Archie was the son of Mrs. Parnell by her first husband.

We met one evening for tea at the Yeats's house in Greystones, and as my wife and I were driving back to Dublin in our car, we naturally offered the McTiers a lift, as Kingstown, where the Parnells' house was, lay on the way home. We got there about six-thirty or so, and the Parnells insisted that we should stay to dinner. We hesitated ; in fact, we had two friends, Frank Craig and Dorothy Stopford, coming to Sunday-night supper at our own house. However, the Parnells were so insistent, and the brandy they gave us so kindly, that we decided our guests knew each other sufficiently well to entertain each other in our absence. Good or ill manners, have it which way you will, we stayed on and had a gloriously jolly evening. All sorts of people came in, and sang or recited ; the butler, a character, contributed greatly to the general hilarity. During dinner some one needed mustard—none was available. The butler, Hutchinson, beat a hasty retreat kitchen-ward and reappeared with hastily-mixed mustard in a cracked egg-cup. 'Excuse the primitive mustard,' he said, and slapped the egg-cup down on the table. We ate it all the more pleasantly for his apology.

Another evening at the Parnells' Kingstown house stands out in one's mind : this was a few weeks after the previous visit, and on an occasion when some of the fleet were in the harbour. The Parnells gave a dance, to which the officers of the fleet were invited, and the place was packed with young naval officers. One lad, at about ten-thirty or so, got very tight. He was making a perfect fool of himself in the ball-room. Mrs. Parnell came up to me, erroneously, no doubt, considering me a person of responsibility, and asked me to get him away. My car was parked in the garden. I got hold of the lad and told him he must get back to his ship ; and by dint of saying it to him twenty or

thirty times (the only way to deal with a drunken man), at last got it into his head he had best leave. I got him out to my car and drove him down to the harbour, and put him aboard the pinnace, or gig, or whatever ship's boat it was, in charge of a worldly-wise petty officer. I went back to the dance, feeling a little exhausted after my struggle with the navy, went into the smoking-room, and had a whisky-and-soda with John Parnell. On returning a few minutes afterwards to the ball-room, I saw my gallant naval officer, left at sea shortly before, perfectly soberly dancing with the prettiest girl in the room. I gave it up: the ways of the navy were too obscure for the comprehension of a mere army officer. Good luck to that youth; if he survived the war, I expect he is making his mark as an administrator in some branch of the Admiralty; or perhaps strafing Chinese pirates. He was a great lad, anyway.

The Parnells figured prominently in certain circles in Dublin of the time. They were a charming couple, hospitable to a fault, and with an old-world dignity and ease of manner which can only be thought of as Georgian. I mean, of course, 'Georgian' in the eighteenth-century sense, and not in its vulgar modern interpretation.

One must leave the Parnells and their outlook to consider a different phase of life of this time. I am writing of Irish life as I saw it, and must not unduly stress any one side of it.

'Pat' was a figure who roused a great deal of interest in literary and political circles some years before the war. His real name was Kenny, and he had wide journalistic experience behind him when he came to Navan to edit *The Peasant*, a local paper owned by McCann, a well-known Dublin stockbroker and financier. *The Peasant* was a weekly journal strongly Roman Catholic in its views, but very anti-clerical. It was the

first time that the anti-clerical party had come into the open, although, of course, the Irish priesthood had been attacked often enough in books and on the platform by individuals.

The Peasant made a sensation, and every one read it during the two or three years of its lively career.

When McCann died, *The Peasant* became even more anti-clerical. Mrs. McCann, a very devout Catholic, was then the sole proprietor. It was said that her parish priest went to her and told her that her late husband was having a bad time in purgatory on account of the attitude of her paper. Not caring to risk it, she shut down the paper, sacked Pat, and *The Peasant* ceased to be. It was rather a pity, as it had added to the joy of life, and, no doubt, did a lot of good by expressing views largely held but usually suppressed among its readers. Pat was a remarkably good writer; far too good to have wasted his time, materially, in editing a small Irish paper. A book he wrote about this time, dealing with religious and social problems, will be remembered by all who read it, not only for its interesting ideas but as an excellent piece of prose-writing. I forget where Pat had learned his trade, but imagine that, like Synge, it was in Paris. Although I wrote intermittently for *The Peasant*, I met Pat only once: on the occasion of the row at the production of 'The Playboy'. He made a speech from the stalls on that night during the confusion, and an excellent speech it was for those near enough to hear it. Subsequently, he, Hugh Lane, and several others, myself included, had a long discussion on the whole question of Irish morality. One forgets details, but Pat was highly entertaining and original in his views. I have no idea what became of him, but expect he is championing some cause or attacking some social evil somewhere in the world: that was his mission by temperament and training.

Joe Hone, whom I have mentioned in the chapter on

'The Theatre', was at this time director of Maunsell and Co., who published so many excellent books, including a beautiful edition of Synge's collected works. He brought out a quarterly, the *Shanachie* (the *Story Teller*), which during its short life attained a remarkably high standard. The first number contained a story by Shaw and articles by George Moore, and it contained an attractive poem by Roberts, also a director of Maunsells, which included the lines:

> . . . tired hearts
> Like the glittering spray from the water-carts.

The *Irish Times* reviewer, a certain Miss Little, a lady with literary pretensions of a conventional sort, gave this poem a tremendous cutting-up: why one cannot imagine. Most people whose literary tastes were of a cultivated standard spoke highly of it. The *Shanachie* was exceedingly well received both in London and by the English papers, but, like all such ventures of its sort in Dublin, it failed through lack of a sufficiently large educated public to support it. The standard of public taste in literary matters in Ireland, outside of Dublin, has always been a very low one, and still is so. Dublin, on the contrary, one is told by publishers and booksellers, ranks very high, and, in proportion to its size, more first-rate books are sold there than in any English city.

The reviews in the *Irish Times* are usually excellent, and indeed after the time that John Healy became editor it was a really first-class paper. Healy was at this time Irish correspondent to *The Times*, and thousands of English readers got their Irish news through the medium of his vision. He was a man of rather unusual quality to find in his position: he had a brilliant literary career in Trinity and was a good classical and French scholar. Quite soon after he took

his degree he was appointed lecturer in English literature to the Alexandra College. My father was warden at the time, and possibly it was through his influence that Healy got this appointment so young. The appointment made some little stir in educational circles, as the placing of so young a man in such a position in a ladies' college was considered to be revolutionary—and extremely rash. John Healy justified his backers and was a great success : and, as no one ever heard any gossip about him, one presumes discreet also. Healy had remarkably little journalistic experience when he was made editor of the *Irish Times*. But again he made a success of his work from the beginning, and lifted his paper into the honourable position it has held ever since.

All through the trouble before and after the war, and during the war too, the *Irish Times* took a steady line and gave a wholesome lead when many papers were doing very much the reverse. It soothed where others ruffled. It helped very greatly to reconcile conflicting opinion when a large section of the Press was doing precisely the opposite.

The *Irish Review*, which ran fairly successfully and which was also of a high standard, was another rather interesting review on similar lines to the *Shanachie*. It was edited by Father Finlay, a Jesuit, a scholar and distinguished man of letters. Father Finlay was one of those very modern priests, exceedingly well-read and travelled—a man of the world and far removed from the simple, ignorant parish priest of Ireland of the time. How he managed to remain inside the priesthood ; how, indeed, any man of his ability and learning can be a priest of any Christian denomination to-day is a question which, I confess, baffles me. It is outside my comprehension. But there it is : it is one of the inexplicable facts of life. One must admit that many clergy are perfectly honest men ; one must admit they

are often cultivated and widely-read men of great brain-power. Yet that they can preach the dogmas and reconcile their intellects to the ecclesiastical system of some Church or another is a fact that one simply cannot understand. One admits it, as it obviously exists, but the why and the wherefore elude one.

The *Irish Review* ran for some years and may, like 'Charlie's Aunt', be running still. It didn't pay its contributors, and consequently got a lot of good amateur writers, while avoiding the best professionals and the hacks alike. This was rather a good way of collecting good original material. Of course, the best writers were not included among its contributors, but many people sent good articles which they would not have thought of sending to the ordinary commercial editor. If some one started such a review in London to-day, I am certain he could produce a dozen or so numbers which would be extraordinarily interesting, and of high literary value. It couldn't be permanent, of course; but it would be worth doing as even a minor antidote to the commercialism of to-day.

If one wishes to keep the whole literary activity of Dublin in true perspective, one must think a little of the Gaelic League and the Irish language movement of this time. The prime mover in the revival of the language activity was, of course, Douglas Hyde. A decade or so before the war the Gaelic League embarked on a crusade to revive the Irish language—for all practical purposes dead by this time. A handful of Irish speakers existed here and there on outlying islands and in backward glens, but it was only a small handful. Only a very few of them could not speak English; only a very few did not speak English in preference to Irish. I have wandered around Ireland in the most remote districts, and have never yet met anyone who had no English—I doubt, indeed, if such a person exists to-day.

However, Douglas Hyde and his followers decided that Irish must be revived, and accordingly classes were established hither and yon to teach people their mother-tongue. The movement was about as logical and as useful as one concerned with teaching people in Devon to-day the Saxon tongue of pre-Norman days would be. As mental gymnastics, indeed, no one will deny the value of a second language. Further, bilingual people are usually more nimble-witted than those of one tongue. This is a perfectly obvious fact and requires no stressing. Granted this, then if all this energy was to be put into the learning of a language, why not a language that would be of some commercial and educational value? Imagine anyone doing business in Irish! As regards educational value—well, when you have learned Irish, there is nothing to read in that language: it is devoid of literature, and you will meet nobody who can talk to you, except a few old peasants in Achill or the Arans. One sees they have gone farther in the movement to-day. A knowledge of Irish is demanded of the Free State civil servants, and even the army. As an interesting study for scholars with plenty of time on their hands, the language movement can be justified; as a national movement, it is too absurd. It will die out, of course, in time, but meanwhile it has wasted a lot of good effort which had far better have been otherwise applied.

Douglas Hyde and his little band of disciples started the movement; it was taken up by grocers' assistants and solicitors' clerks in Dublin and the provinces. The mainspring of the movement was not so much a pro-Irish as an anti-British one. It was more negative than positive.

It seems to me that the general literary movement in Dublin at this time was of importance. The period, of course, is too close to us to get a true perspective, and whether any of the work produced then will live

it is impossible to say. One can at least feel that there was a great deal of good work published during the ten pre-war years.

George Moore brought out his *Hail and Farewell*, which is mentioned elsewhere in these pages. James Stephens wrote *The Charwoman's Daughter*, that amazing novel of slum life which, in my opinion, will become a classic for Dublin people. He wrote several other books as well, including *Here Are Ladies*, though none, one feels, with quite the same charm as *The Charwoman's Daughter*. He also published verses which are probably as widely read to-day as those of any modern poet.

Æ was writing energetically, and was always interesting, although whether he can be counted first-rate or not I do not profess to say. As a mystic and a seer he must certainly take his place high among those of similar vision and expression.

Patrick Colum wrote a book or two, but I think he was more appreciated in the States than in these islands. Colum had been a disciple of Yeats, but during the few years round about 1910 he had ceased to sit at Yeats's feet, and, so far as one could judge, there was little or no friendship between them.

About this time Colum paid his first visit to London and armed himself with an introduction to Bernard Shaw. It is told that he burst into Shaw's presence, shook him by the hand and remarked, ' How do you do, Mr. Shaw ? I don't like London ; it's so provincial.'

Yeats, of course, was so much taken up with the Abbey that he had little time for writing, but he did produce some of his best work during this time, and I think some new editions of his earlier works were published. I am not sure if his *Deirdre* was written then or at an earlier date, but I believe, at any rate, that it was largely rewritten before it was first produced about this time. Yeats, Synge and Russell each

dramatized this magnificent old story; and each succeeded in producing a charming play. There used to be considerable discussion as to their respective merits, but I think most people will agree that Yeats's *Deirdre* is far the best. It is more dramatic in construction than the other two—it plays better, and although Synge's *Deirdre* reads well enough, it does not, it seems to me at least, hold one, when acted, with anything like the power of most of his other plays.

I believe some one else has written another *Deirdre* since then, but as I have not read or seen it I can give no opinion about it. He must be a bold man. A good deal of Synge's best writing was done at this time, and his collected works were published by Maunsell & Co., shortly before the war. This edition was in four volumes, beautifully turned out, and I should think must have been very successful from the publishers' point of view.

Among the best-known Irish writers of this time is Katharine Tynan. She is rather difficult to place. One cannot put her in the first rank—it is doubtful, indeed, if one could honestly say that she ranked among the best of the second-rate novelists of to-day. Yet she has a certain quality of refinement of view that lifts her out of the class to which she belongs in literature. I think this quality is derived from her simple and straightforward view of life. I cannot imagine Katharine Tynan questioning the views of her Church, or the main moral aspects of social life of her own generation. She has written some fine things, and is generous in her appreciation of those she cares for. Her preface to Mrs. de Burgh Daly's *Life of Percy French*, for instance, is perfect of its kind. Not a word could be added or omitted without spoiling the spirit of the whole.

As a poetess, one feels, she is not so good: I remember Willie Yeats saying one evening, when a new volume

of her poems was being discussed, ' She is a fine writer struggling with an unfamiliar medium.'

Katharine Tynan was a friend of my mother and my aunts in the days of their girlhood ; her family lived close to my grandfather's home, and I recollect her coming to the house when I was a little boy. We met occasionally in the years before the war, when I visited her at her home at Shankhill. Sometimes, but not often, she came to the Arts Club. On these rare visits she was always a welcome visitor. She was a close friend of the Aberdeens, and wrote charmingly of them in a recently-published book of reminiscences. Her daughter, Pamela, has already achieved some literary distinction, and looks as if she may have a future.

Mrs. Hinkson (Katharine Tynan's married name) has many amusing stories in the book referred to above. She tells one concerning my aunt, Lady Young, and Sir George Young. She was staying with them at their well-known place ' Formosa ', near Cookham on the Thames. Sir George was at the time getting on in years, but retained, most keenly, his love of boating. Mrs. Hinkson was stout and not active. Sir George invited her to go out one afternoon in a canoe. Mrs Hinkson was anxious to please, but rather alarmed. She asked Lady Young if it was safe to go. Lady Young said it was not at all safe, but Sir George would be mortally offended if she did not go. Fortunately, the voyage ended happily, and every one was pleased.

Mrs. Hinkson has been a most prolific writer, and I have no notion what number of novels she has produced. I confess I haven't read more than half of them. She came of a good old Roman Catholic family of large farmers, and her success as a novelist is therefore rather remarkable. One does not associate people of this stock in Ireland with literature : indeed, quite the reverse.

Although not well known as an author, one other

person stands out in my mind who should be properly brought into this chapter—Lord Ashbourne. Well known, both on his own account and as the son of a distinguished father, he was one of the most striking and vigorously picturesque people of the time. He had a remarkably fine head, and his clean-cut, bronzed features and piercing dark eyes made him at once an arresting personality in any company. He always wore the Irish kilt, and this, which would have been ridiculous on most men in modern conditions, added to his distinction.

Lord Ashbourne was the most enthusiastic of Irish nationality lovers. He spoke Irish easily and well, and it will be remembered when he took his seat in the House of Lords he addressed that august assembly in his native tongue. As a matter of fact, he was rather fond of this form of humour. He disliked speaking English (the language of the despised conqueror) in public, and generally began his speeches in Irish or French. Among his friends no such scruples seemed to worry him, and he spoke, as an educated English or Irish man, remarkably well. In fact, I should place him among the best conversationalists I have met. He wrote well, although only at infrequent intervals, and with a charm of style and clear, logical expression hard to surpass. I did not know him well, but met him and his brothers and sisters at frequent intervals, on various occasions during my boyhood's days and the time of my early manhood. During the few years about 1910–14 I used to meet him fairly often at lunch at the Arts Club: he was always an interesting and stimulating companion.

There is a good story told of Ashbourne and Mahaffy. I have alluded to the former's habit of addressing people in Irish. Mahaffy detested that language and the whole Gaelic movement, but was of course reputed to be one of the finest Greek scholars, including modern Greek, of his day. Meeting Mahaffy at a garden-party Ashbourne

went up to him and began speaking to him in modern Greek. Mahaffy glared at him and barked out, ' Don't speak to me in that filthy language.'

His younger brother, Victor Gibson, although a barrister by profession, had served in both the army and the navy. He met his death under tragic circumstances just after the war. Lord Ashbourne was often laughed at by those of his own class (mainly for wearing a kilt), but if every Irish nobleman had had his sanity of outlook and his social and political courage, Ireland would have had a different political development, and, in my opinion, would still be part of the United Kingdom. Whether, indeed, this would be for better or worse is a matter of opinion. In mine, it would have been infinitely better for both Ireland and England.

CHAPTER VIII

POLITICS AND ALARMS

Rebellions in the Making—The Home Rule Bill—The Ulster Volunteers—National Volunteers—Gun-running—A Trustful Officer—Sham Gun-running—Dublin University O.T.C.—John Redmond—Erskine Childers—1914—Ireland an Armed Camp—Lord Carson—Responsibility for the present Free State

THE few years prior to the war were ones of intense political excitement in Ireland. Feeling worked up gradually until it was at boiling-point. Rebellions and revolutions, or whatever you like to call them, became matters of everyday life, and in the summer of 1914 Ireland was an armed camp: civil strife seemed certain. The outbreak of the war turned the tide of events, however, and matters ultimately developed on entirely unforeseen lines.

The Home Rule Bill looked in 1913 as if it must come into force in the following year, and Ulster started her great movement of resistance—resistance by force if necessary. The Ulster volunteers were formed, and every able-bodied man from sixteen to sixty of Unionist persuasion was enrolled. In addition, thousands of Ulstermen in England and overseas pledged themselves to support the North in the event of Home Rule becoming law. The leaders included many great men among them, notably, of course, Sir Edward Carson. Statesmen, business men, soldiers, sailors and professional men of distinction gave their services as leaders. The cohesion was amazing. The actual military side was extremely democratic. In 1914, while staying with a

professor of Belfast University, I saw a company of infantry drilling, and drilling extremely well, under the command of an officer who in civil life was a groom. His master, the rector of a large parish, was in the ranks. Such cases could be multiplied by the thousand. It was surprising to find this democratic quality in such a movement in Ireland, where class distinction has remained much more acute during the last fifty years than it did in England.

The Ulster Volunteers started the great game of gun-running, which game was, of course, taken up heartily by the National Volunteers in due course. Some of the gun-running episodes on both sides were amusing enough. I had a personal experience of one in July 1914. We had taken a small cottage for the summer in the fishing village called Loughshinny, some fifteen miles north of Dublin, and we were on very friendly terms with most of the villagers. Our cottage was close to the end of the pier—the last house in the crooked village street. One night we heard the tramping of feet on the cobblestones ; and then came gruff orders. Every one's nerves were keyed up at that time, and we immediately suspected that gun-running or some similar venture was afoot. I went out cautiously, and was promptly challenged by a sentry. I asked to see the officer in command, and a smart young captain of the National Volunteers, clad in the green uniform of that body, appeared. I mentioned the name of a well-known yachtsman whom I suspected of being concerned in the running of arms. The officer asked, 'Are you a friend of ——'s ?' I said, 'Yes ,' and he at once brought me on to the pier and discussed the situation. It appeared that no one quite knew what was happening. An important consignment of arms from Germany was being got ashore that night from ——'s yacht, but to deceive and puzzle the authorities several false landings were being made at different

places. The officer was not sure if this at Loughshinny was the real thing or only a false landing. A boat soon stood in, and was cautiously hailed. Some one landed, and after a hurried conversation with my officer, returned, and the boat made off. It was not the real thing, but only a blind. Meanwhile the unfortunate coastguards had been locked up in their houses, with a strong guard over them. Their telephone had been cut and they were powerless to do anything. The real landing that night took place at a beach some twenty miles on the other side of Dublin, and a fairly large cargo, containing, I subsequently heard, a thousand rifles, was successfully got ashore. The situation was not lacking in humour. I was entirely out of sympathy with the gun-runners, but as they had accepted me as a friend I could not possibly have given them away had they really got the rifles ashore in my presence, and had I become aware of their destination, which no doubt I should have done. I often wondered if that young officer went through the whole upheaval with the same touching confidence he reposed in me that night.

Almost immediately after this episode came the war. On the outbreak of war, in Dublin, as in most English cities, there was a general rush of men to join some branch of the forces. With very many enlisting was impossible, or seemed unnecessary at that stage. Many men, keen enough, felt that matters should be allowed to develop a little before they could make up their minds where their duty really lay. Meanwhile most men, at least most men of the professional and business classes, were anxious to obtain some military training.

The Dublin University O.T.C. offered facilities at once, and the day after war was declared men were passing into its ranks by hundreds. These were in theory confined to Oxford, Cambridge and Trinity graduates or undergraduates, but in fact many others

who were considered suitable by the C.O. were allowed to join.

The C.O. at this time was Major Tate—now Sir Robert Tate, and the adjutant Major Harris, who subsequently received the D.S.O. for his services.

A few days after, and while a large body of enthusiastic recruits were receiving their elementary instruction in drill under the officers of the O.T.C., the body was formed into the Graduates Corps, and continued to train as a separate company. Ernest Julian, to whom I have referred elsewhere in these pages, was its first sergeant-major, and an extremely efficient one. The corps grew in size and military smartness, until a few weeks after the outbreak of war part of it was absorbed into a service battalion of the ' Dublins '. A shocking waste of good man-power. Not a man in the corps that marched off to Kingsbridge to entrain for the Curragh, to serve as a Tommy, but was a good officer or a good potential officer. These men were the pick of Dublin's young professional and upper classes. Most of them should have been company or battalion commanders—or at least platoon officers ; yet the majority were killed as privates in the first Gallipoli landing. One cannot understand such happenings ; no human brain can hope to get at the reason of such waste. No human brain can, indeed, justify the tragedy of war—its stupid waste of energy and its aftermath in frustrated hopes and blighted endeavour and spoilt lives. It is difficult to be courageous and patient under these great stresses. It is little wonder, when every nation went through this meaningless whirlpool, this destructive whirlpool, that there is such unrest in the world to-day.

It is only a very brave man, or a very dull man, who can face life to-day with composure and assurance.

The Graduates Corps went on, and trained hundreds who acquitted themselves as men in France and on the

other fronts. The College park, long given over to Rugby and cricket, became a little Curragh or Aldershot, and rang to the cry of military commands, or to the hoarse yells of practice charges complete with fixed bayonets and excited section commanders.

Few training-grounds of the allies sent more gallant leaders and privates to the front than did this little corner of the Empire. Few units received more honours and achieved a finer record of service in proportion to the numbers it contributed than Trinity.

While the loyal citizens were training in the T.C.D. corps and other similar units, the antagonistic element was no less active. The National Volunteers were recruiting very rapidly for some time before the war. Their avowed object at first was to fight the Ulster Volunteers. Colonel Moore, a real colonel, be it noted, and George Moore's brother, was one of the important leaders. I think he was the military head or C.-in-C., but am not quite sure of this. I went to see him once, and found him a mild little man with a watery eye. He looked like a retired major of the sort one sees by the dozen in Bournemouth or Clifton.

The National Volunteers, started to fight against Ulster, soon (as does every movement in Southern Ireland) split, and one-half remained loyal to its original objective ; the other and more extreme section assumed a political coat of anti-English cut.

I will tell an incident illustrating this change of feeling.

On the first or second day of the war John Redmond, of splendid memory, made his famous speech in the House of Commons. He said that Ireland was with England, and if English troops were removed from Ireland, Ireland's sons would defend their country. This speech was received both in the House and by the Press with acclamation. Alas ! John Redmond little knew the temper of the extreme section of his own

followers. On the day after Redmond's speech, numbers of Dublin men, like myself, thought, 'Well, I don't belong to his party, but he has done the big thing. Let us shake hands, and we will join up in the Irish volunteers, pledged by John Redmond to the cause of the Allies.'

Accordingly, Ernest Julian, A. Harrison, M.P., another and myself went up to the head-quarters that night and joined up as privates. We went on parade at once—a fairly big parade it was, numbering, I should say, fifteen hundred or two thousand men in battalion formation. We did a few simple movements, when we were called to attention, and an officer in smart green uniform (we were all in civvies) and a black beard came forward to address us. I forget his exact words, but they were, generally speaking, as follows :

'Men of the first battalion of the Dublin Regiment, are you prepared to take up arms against England's enemies ?' This seemed a sensible question, and was indeed the reason why my particular four stood there. To our amazement, a wild shout of 'No' rang down the ranks. We, nonplussed, stood firm and quiet. The officer with the beard continued, 'Men, are you ready to take up arms against the enemies of Ireland on these shores ?'

A unanimous shout of 'Yes' this time from a thousand throats. We thought, 'This is no place for us', and, taking advantage of a wheel near the gate, put our heads down and ran for it. We deserted, hurriedly and in unpremeditated fashion. I am to-day the only survivor of that four, and it is useless therefore for the sceptical to ask for corroboration of my simple tale.

Many obscure people—obscure, that is, in the pre-war days—stood out subsequently as of importance. Among these the most pathetic and the most tragic of all was Erskine Childers, scholar, writer and man of action. Erskine Childers was one of the most tragic

figures in recent Irish history—indeed to me he was the most tragic of all. He was not more than an acquaintance of mine, therefore one can write without personal prejudice.

I met him first about 1910 in a small hostelry in North Wales, on an occasion that was one of the saddest of my life. Donald Robertson, our mutual friend, had been killed by a fall on the first day of a climbing holiday. It was at Easter, and his family were abroad, and we had the sadness of his death to contend with as well as the difficulty of trying to get wires through to his mother. Childers and his wife had come up to the inn to help, and we had a few hurried and unsatisfactory talks on the death of our friend and its cause.

I never heard of Childers again until his book *The Riddle of the Sands* made him famous. In a few days he jumped into fame as an author and as a prophet of a great war. When hostilities came, he was taken on at once as an observer in the R.N.A.S.—although far over the age prescribed for that body—and served in this capacity for, I think, three to four years, receiving the D.S.O. and other decorations.

Ultimately he threw in his lot with the Irish party which stood for separation, and was tried and condemned to death and executed by the Free State. He fought for England, he fought for Ireland, and Ireland executed him as a conspirator against the common weal. It takes Ireland to produce such tragic waste. In any other country of Europe he would have received honour and distinction. I never liked him as a person, but as a citizen, a supremely honest man, and a patriot, I yield to no one in my respect and admiration for Childers, a gallant Irish gentleman. May each of those we love die so finely.

In Dublin, after Childers's death, the city was inarticulate. In one sense Dublin is inarticulate, perhaps the most sad of all defects. Nationality may

explain this a little—a sullen hostility to others explains it more. It is the dreadful feeling pertaining to those who happen to be the under-dog.

The whole question of speech is indeed a complex matter—difficult alike to the historian and the artist.

The invention of speech probably developed the animal notion of music to a higher plane. In most modern music, or perhaps civilized music would be a better depiction, rhythm is essential. It gives a sort of pause—a relief necessary to the main theme.

In uncultivated speaking, singing, or their admixture, as is the keening of Ireland, this rhythm is very distinctive. All speakers of note of modern times carry it into their utterance consciously, or, as I think, more unconsciously. One finds it especially among the Celts (or the Iberians). Possibly this may be a survival of more primitive instincts than are found in the Teutons or Saxons. If so, it explains much that is puzzling in the mentality of Ireland.

The spring and summer of 1914 saw Ireland, literally, an armed camp. 'Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right,' had become more than a political saying. Even the most cynical of British politicians realized by about May that the North meant business. No one was quite sure what the South would do. Obviously, if Ulster fought, she would fight to resist an Act of Parliament, therefore she would be in the position of a rebel against the Crown, and as such would be opposed by the forces of the Crown. But what would the army do if ordered to force Ulster to give in? This question was vexing the minds of many men in high places, as well as being a matter of daily comment and discussion by ordinary people. The general view was that the army would not fight against men carrying the Union Jack and singing 'God Save the King'. The leaders of the National (Southern) Volunteers were in a difficult position. Suppose the British Army did refuse to fight Ulster,

what could they do ? It was pretty clear they could do nothing—but meanwhile, it seemed best to go on with military preparations.

For my own part, I believe that the then current view was correct, and that the army would not have obeyed orders to coerce the North. The Curragh incident was strong evidence of this, but as many of those concerned are alive and on the active list to-day, it would be probably indiscreet, and certainly in doubtful taste, to enter into details here.

The whole situation was bewildering enough, and British and Irish statesmen and military chiefs lost a vast amount of sleep (and weight) in their efforts to find a solution. They were not destined to do so : the dark cloud gathering over Europe and bursting in August on an unprepared world solved such parochial matters in no uncertain manner. Both leaders behaved with unexampled fineness and generosity. Both called for a truce and offered their services to the Empire, and urged their followers to do the same. Ulster responded magnificently, and, as has always been the case, the Unionists of Southern Ireland did likewise. To their everlasting credit, large numbers of Nationalists, led by W. Redmond and T. Kettle and such men, gave a splendid example of wider patriotism, and thousands of the rank and file joined the forces of the Crown. Both Redmond and Kettle were fated to die in action. Redmond, though years over military age, did not avail himself of his position and the opportunity it gave him for personal advancement, and served as a junior regimental officer, dying as a major. In looking back on the whole position to-day, it is not easy to take a judicial view and say with any conviction who was right or wrong in the matter of Ulster and the South. It is still too near us, and a true perspective is not yet possible. I hazard no guess as to what attitude the historian of a hundred years hence will think fit to adopt

as to the rebel attitude of Ulster, for as such, indeed, one must admit it.

It is a curious thought, but I think a true one, that had it not been for Lord Carson the Irish Free State would not be in being to-day. If Ulster had accepted the Home Rule Act, Southern Ireland would have also. But Ulster raised an army to resist the Act. Southern Ireland raised an army with a somewhat vague objective. Once the Northern leaders had gone so far without the Government taking action, it was obviously impossible to stop the South following their example. Thus they stood, glaring at each other. It was the show of force started in the North which caused the show of force in the South ; which show was destined to become a reality and which organized the events that led to the Act giving Ireland her present status. One may or may not like it—if I were an Englishman I certainly should not—but one cannot deny the fact that it was force that produced the Free State. No amount of political effort could conceivably have had such a result.

The Irish historian of the future writing from the Nationalist standpoint will certainly head his views *' Arma virunque cano '.*

CHAPTER IX

A MISCELLANY—ARCHITECTURE AND OTHER THINGS

Eighteenth-century Architecture—The Question of Style—Lettering and Signs—Freedom and Licence—The A.A.I—The Design Clubs—Shoddy Advertisements—Sculpture and Nature—Education—Difficulty of Knowing Who to Follow—Drifting—Mendicity—Van Loon—Gestures and Language—Romanesque—The Tests—Where Beauty Lies—Builders and Plans—Restrictions on Buildings—Verses on Leitrim

FROM an artistic point of view the eighteenth century was the period when Ireland reached its zenith; the general culture was not of course purely Irish, although there was a flavour, if one may use the word in such a connexion, which was different, and essentially different, from that of England or the continent.

Architects of the time produced some of the finest renaissance buildings that the world has seen—buildings that were monumental in design and scholarly in detail—many of which have a distinctive touch not found elsewhere. The country is full of fine old Georgian houses quite different from most of those of the same period in England.

In our book *Georgian Mansions in Ireland*, Mr. Sadleir and I took the greatest pains when compiling our list of houses to trace the architect in each case where possible. Taking the period on the whole, certainly in the early part of the century, much of the big work was done by English architects. Castles, of

course, was a German. In spite of this fact the work produced was, I submit, different from that done elsewhere, and was characteristic of the country. No doubt this was to some extent due to the use of local material, but I do not think that this entirely accounts for it—it is something more subtle, and possibly more of a psychological than physical nature.

Recently there were published some extracts from a notable interview with Senator Yeats. Mr. Yeats is reported as saying: 'The truth is that the applied arts are, on the whole, improving, and a new State, like ours, which has no old precedents to consider, should take the fullest advantage of the fact.'

This is a profound truth: architecture in Ireland, for all practical purposes, goes back only to the Georgian period, and the same applies to most of the other arts and crafts. The social ends then were, in their essentials, much the same as they are now, and an architecture which was suitable and native then, is suitable and native still. I know there is a school who hold Irish Romanesque in high esteem—but Irish Romanesque differed but little from any other Romanesque, and, strictly speaking, its origin was no more Irish than was Irish Renaissance. Of course, there were the round towers—so far as we know they do seem to be a local growth or at least development; maybe we shall know more of them some day, and it may be discovered that they came eastward to us from lost Atlantis, and not westward from Ravenna—I don't know, and I certainly don't care, as they are no help to us in solving the problem of national style and design. One might just as well go to a Kaffir kraal for inspiration.

In the report of this interview with Senator Yeats, the writer sums up by saying: 'No country in the world stands so much in need of artistic guidance as Ireland, particularly in relation to architecture. No people are more difficult to deal with in such matters,

more critical without understanding, or more resentful of any interference in their concerns.'

This is only too true, as I can vouch not only from general knowledge but from my own personal experience of working as an architect in both England and Ireland. The uneducated Irishman is enormously more difficult to advise than his English equal; why this is so is a difficult and complex problem.

I have often said and written that it is a bad habit to divide architecture into named periods; for instance, one talks of Jacobean, Georgian or Early Victorian, as if there was a hard-and-fast line between those periods. As a matter of fact this is, of course, not the case at all, and the end of, say, the Jacobean period is in reality far more akin to the beginning of the Georgian period than is the latter to the end of the Georgian period. And so on throughout all the Renaissance. Style is the outcome of the social and economic needs of the age in which it exists, and any attempt to defeat this natural law must, in my opinion, fail. In this principle lies the secret of the failure of such movements as the Gothic Revival, New Art, etc., etc.

The question of lettering and signs, etc., in city architecture is a difficult one. One can hardly walk down a main street in any town at present without seeing a large number of quite decent buildings entirely spoiled by sprawling lettering stuck on here and there. *Punch* recently illustrated this, and in a clever drawing by (I think) George Morrow, depicted the feelings of the poor architect who sees his building after the letter advertisement fiend has done his worst. And a shocking bad worst it often is. The electrician is in danger of becoming an even worse nuisance than the misplaced letters. To quote the words of a leader in the *Manchester Guardian*: 'Piccadilly Circus has been turned into a raree show of flaming bottles and dogs and motor-cars that disappear but never depart.'

The article continues: 'The only justification for these signs, apart from their commercial value, is that much urban architecture is bad enough to deserve them. Where there is already drab vulgarity why should not a gay vulgarity be imposed?' To this not very sturdy argument it is only necessary to oppose the plain fact that opinions will easily differ as to the architecture whose crime is equal to that punishment, and that from the bad areas the infection will easily and rapidly spread. The public whose streets are liable to bedizenment of this kind are already given a veto through their local authorities responsible for the street where the issue is raised, but it is obvious that the control exercised has been quite incommensurate with the possible size of the evil; but a tight control over advertisement has become quite essential to civic self-respect. The flickering sign in particular may give momentary delight to sightseeing wanderers, but as a constant companion it becomes as unwelcome as harsh bells jangled out of tune. There is no reason why cities should not achieve through comprehensive design a pleasing gaiety of illumination, but the come-and-go sign should be controlled out of existence.

Mr. George Moore has recently expressed himself with considerable heat on the subject. We can sympathize with him—goodness knows that most of our towns are ugly enough without this ugliness being enhanced by the purely selfish use of vulgar and rude advertisement.

I was discussing this question at an architectural meeting years ago with a hard-headed business man who had, I think, perhaps less appreciation of beauty either in Nature or Art than any person I have ever met. He used the old arguments about freedom of the individual and liberty of action. I suggested to him that liberty was a myth and that it never had existed and never could exist (in the sense he meant it) in a civilized community. What he meant by liberty was licence;

and that so-called liberty was a thing of the past directly the most simple law was passed by a community. Thus, when the first tribesmen made the rule that you must not steal your fellow's horse bone when he had gone out of the cave, you got restriction of liberty. All legislation ever since has been doing the same thing.

Liberty to all and sundry to put up what buildings, advertisement, or signs they like at the expense of the feelings of others is licence at its worst. It is anarchy, and the amazing thing is that it has been so long tolerated.

The cultural level in architecture is possibly lower in Ireland than in any of the other arts. Perhaps, indeed, this is so throughout Europe, but I do not think that it applies to America, where the names of the architects of the important buildings are as well known as the names of famous painters or writers here.

Yet the public buildings in the Dublin of which I write were the best to be found in the British Isles, taken as a whole. Moreover, they were all in harmony. It is curious to think how little these were appreciated—one hopes that the Georgian Society gave a stimulus to such appreciation, and it certainly produced its publications at a fortunate time, a time when art matters generally were receiving great attention largely through the efforts of Hugh Lane.

The architects of Dublin contributed their full share of members. The Architectural Association and Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland took an active part in the artistic activities of the time.

The Architectural Association was a pleasantly social body, and many of its members were also members of the Arts Club.

I remember at an A.A.I. dinner many years ago we prepared a menu in which the list of courses was supplemented by (more or less) suitable quotations. It so

happened we had an unusually large number of guests that year, and the first quotation heading our menu was from the old Norwegian beggar's song :

> We were young, we were merry,
> We were very, very wise,
> And the door stood open at our feast—

which, if not literally true, fairly represented the spirit of the time and those concerned. This pleasant social side of professional life was always a great feature of Dublin. I have been at many architectural functions in London and Liverpool and other great centres, but have never encountered quite the same sociability as existed in Dublin. At present, alas ! social life in Ireland is suffering from many obvious drawbacks and obstacles hard to surmount, and it is not what it was in the good years prior to 1914. This impression may be due to some extent to the jaundiced view that the passing years are inclined to bring to most of us ; but I think not altogether. The stress and turmoil of the last decade has taken its toll of every one's energy, and the strain, while largely unconscious, has had a very great effect. This is, perhaps, more obvious to one who, like myself, is only an occasional visitor. The change to such a one is probably more noticeable than it is to anyone who has been continually resident in Dublin during the last ten years.

It is pleasant to know that many of the Dublin professional institutions are going strong. Among these one can certainly number the A.A.I. One cannot value too highly the existence of such a body, or over-estimate its educational importance. This is especially so in Ireland, where the majority of architects do not receive a university education, as is more and more the custom in England.

One of the most useful features of the A.A. in my

days was the old Design Club that used to meet in Lincoln Place. This was a fine institution. I have a vivid recollection of helpful criticism and clever suggestive sketches, which were most useful to the younger of us at least, and, I think, possibly to the older men also. It used to be worked as follows: a subject was selected, and we all sat round a big table and produced our designs within, I think, a time-limit of about an hour. The drawing, of course, was free-hand and in pencil. We ranged in subjects from small pieces of furniture to large public buildings (to be able to design a town hall in sixty minutes is to aim at an ambitious accomplishment !) The drawings would then be passed round, and each member would give a brief criticism. I remember on one occasion a member, now holding a distinguished position in a public body, referring to my efforts towards producing a book-case as 'the most damnable thing he had ever seen in his life', which if not exactly helpful, was good for my pride. I expect he was right; a book-case is a difficult subject. Indeed, all furniture design is difficult, and in this connexion I have before me as I write an advertisement which I devoutly hope will not effect its objective. It runs something as follows:

'You can Make all your own Household Furniture.

'Carpentry Work comes Natural to Every Man.

'The Practical Wood Worker: A Complete Working Guide to Carpentry and Cabinet-making.

'Articles You can Make: No Experience Needed.'

And then follows a list of articles which the amateur can make, apparently, at once. These range in a vast and formidable array from shoe-racks to summer-houses. Any 'little difficulties' which you may meet are overcome at the outset.

Well, perhaps there are people who can believe all that is claimed for this guide ; and no doubt success of a sort may be achieved by a few ; but that seems to me to be beside the point. A highly-skilled craft such as cabinet-making requires not only long years of technical training, but also a high standard of education in design if any level worth having is to be reached. We all know the efforts of our amateur craftsmen friends, and how distressing they are : the wooden mantelpiece in the smoking-room that ' William carved himself ' ; or the hen-house that ' I put up in my spare time last summer '—the hen-house that lets the hens out and the rain in, and is an outrage on the landscape.

It is difficult enough for the good professional to do good work, but the prayer of anyone who cares for beauty should be : ' Save us from the amateur, O Lord ! '

A further advertisement—same day, same paper—begins tersely and without preamble :

' Start Sketching ',

and goes on to describe at length how rapidly ability may be turned to profitable account. I say without fear of reasoned contradicition that there are and have been far too many people trying to paint and draw to-day. Nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand pictures painted have no justification on artistic or any other grounds. There may be—there possibly are—a hundred artists in England to-day whose energy as artists is justified by the work they produce—though, indeed, I doubt this. In Dublin, at the time I write of, there might have been ten. If all the others had stopped painting pictures, and taken to tilling the land or driving taxis, the world would have been better. No, indeed ; the sketchers want no encouragement ; if I had my way I should change these advertisements into ' Stop Sketching '.

On turning the pages of the same paper I find another exhortation :

'Study Art at Home',

which continues in the same general vein as the previous advertisements, and suggests that attendance at art schools, etc., is no real use, and that the way to become an artist is to study by correspondence. Even the 'young professional whose work lacks finish' is promised success. Well, well, it's a credulous world—a foolish world.

Art education, if it is to be of any value, must be by close and intimate personal touch and example. Even the grammar of the arts must be so learned. Architecture is no exception.

During the years of which I write Irish architects and artists were inclined to follow a literary tradition rather than a natural one. To cast back for a moment into ancient history it is clear that the Assyrian sculptors, for instance, could follow nature in representing animals with which they were familiar. They knew the details of lions, especially the so-called maneless lions of Asia. It was the fidelity of art to nature that marked skill and genius in artists. There are men and women in the world who do not realize the difference between muscles and sinews, arteries and veins. Many such preferred the silhouette of a friend to the 'Three Graces' of Botticelli, or a gravestone-cutter's cherub to the 'Hermes' of Praxiteles. Nevertheless, many men and women, ignorant of art, often possessed a sense of humour. Near the dissecting-room of the Middlesex Hospital a Jew opened a rag-and-bone shop, and on the balcony he fixed up a plaster cast of Venus de Medici, and plastered over her omphalos a placard bearing this pathetic appeal: 'Rags Wanted'.

One cannot suddenly evolve new methods of education —it is folly to try. All these short-cuts are shoddy

commercialism, and are of no value to a country, a person, or anyone or anything, except to the promoters.

A sense of discipline, or duty if you like, is essential in the early stages of art education—at any rate, till the grammar is mastered ; after that, originality can develop in its own way—if it has the ability.

It is often said that the Irish as a race have little sense of duty ; and, in a certain way, this is, I think, rather true, or at least as true as any such generalization. Anyone who has lived in rural Ireland knows full well that the herd or the labourer will leave his job for hours if hounds run near him, or for some such other cause. How much work is done within a five miles radius of a race-meeting or coursing match during the progress of the same in the country ? We have a playful way of referring to this as the ' sporting spirit ', and I have myself every sympathy with it, and have, indeed, been a martyr to it all my life. From the point of view of efficiency, however, or even for the formation of character, it is a bad business. Generally Irishmen lose this quality when they go abroad—they have to, because it would not be tolerated elsewhere. Somehow, Irishmen seem to find it difficult to do what they are told ; they are very unamenable to discipline, and every one wants to be a leader. The whole history of Ireland is full of overthrown leaders, and the page that has been written in the last ten years is no exception to the previous ones. More's the pity.

Many young, very young, men have died in the service of Ireland, though whether the motives that have moved them in recent years have been wise or fanatical it is yet too early to judge. It is all too close to us, and we have not yet got the facts into proper perspective. ' Those whom the gods love die young ' is a proverb that has always seemed to me to be obscure. Does it mean literally that fine people really die in their youth, or does it mean that the best folk of the world,

thus loved by the gods, are always young and remain youthful till their death? The latter, I think.

It is always a sad business to think of men cut off from their enthusiasms by death, especially young men who might have been more useful had they matured a little and brought a riper judgment and more experience to bear on the problems they were trying to solve. This has been so common an occurrence in the last few years that we have got hardened to it; yet the tragedy remains.

All these young lives have gone, and many of us, rather weary, perhaps, and certainly very stale, have got to 'carry on'. Well, let us do so as cheerfully as may be and tackle the task. Before the war I heard a certain song which had a considerable vogue: one heard it everywhere. The first lines of the chorus ran:

> Don't go down the mine, Daddy,
> Dreams very often come true.
> Daddy, you know it would break my heart
> If anything happened to you.

One evening, while dining at a restaurant with a lady of wit, and famed for her caustic comments on current affairs, I quoted this song, and she, rapidly discussing the then trade-union view, parodied the original thus—her view suggested the outlook of the working-class:

> Don't do any more work, Daddy.
> Your mates do it better, that's true.
> Daddy, you know it would break my heart,
> If they earn more money than you.

Which, indeed, seemed to sum up the position in Ireland. Politics, Commerce, Labour—especially Labour—in whatever field one searched, it all seemed to boil down

to the question as to who could catch the eye and get the best job. This may be pessimistic ; I don't know, but so it struck one.

During a recent walk in Donegal hills with a geological friend, the subject of the glacial periods, and especially the last Ice Age, came under discussion. I found that I wanted to know more about it, and a few evenings afterwards took down a book and read the subject again. The author arrives at a perfectly definite opinion which he gives, not as conjecture or theory, but as fact. He attributes the causes of the Ice Age to two or three main factors : the ellipse of the earth's orbit round the sun, the tilt of the earth's axis, and the polar wobble, which last he compares to that of a sleeping top. This is quite convincing and satisfactory, and any normal person who is not a geologist will be quite satisfied and convinced by this theory.

This was my own position ; alas for the imperfection in human power of reason and deduction !

A few days after this I was again walking with my geological friend, and we happened to again touch on the same subject—the result of an encounter with what was obviously part of a terminal moraine. I mentioned the explanation as given in the book I had read. My friend laughed and said that the entire theory was out of date and completely discredited by modern geologists. He offered me a recent book by one of the recognized and most up-to-date authorities, well known to the students and younger geologists of the day. My friend promised to enlighten my ignorance, and in accordance with his promise a book duly arrived at my house. I spent an entertaining evening or two with this book, and as a result came to the conclusion that the older theory as to the cause of the glacial periods was incorrect, and that the author had put his money on the wrong horse.

The more modern book took the view that the main

causes of the Ice Ages three, four, or five, were purely local, and that the relationship of the earth to the sun had nothing to say to them. The main point was that the difference in levels, and consequently climate, was due to the various folding and crushing of the earth's crust producing, as they did (and do), a fresh inter-relation of the land heights and ocean depths. I cannot here enter into more detail, but the fact remains that I was entirely convinced that the later view is correct, and that the older idea is erroneous.

Now, if I had not encountered the second book more or less by accident, I should probably have gone through life quite satisfied that the Ice Age, or Ages, had been brought about by the changes in the position of this planet in relation to the sun.

I quote the above as a simple illustration in my own mind of how hard it is to find the right authority to follow when we are in difficulties ; how convincing one theory may be until one meets another, and how subtle a final selection must be if one really hopes for guidance in the various problems to be met in our social life—especially during difficult times.

Leading politicians are no more infallible than other citizens—there are always more than one who would guide and show the way ; and prior to 1914 in Ireland this was the case in a most marked degree. There are many theorists who are only too willing to lead—nay, they insist on doing so, no matter how unwilling we may be to follow as students. This unwillingness to learn the doctrines as preached by some of our professors was and is fairly obvious in Ireland, as is witnessed to-day by the large number of people who have left the country rather than sit at the feet of the modern political experimenters.

One of the great difficulties that always seem to exist during a transition stage of political and social reconstruction, or revolution, is the setting up, very

artificially, of a false standard of economic values. The normal laws of supply and demand are upset, and it takes a long time before the balance is adjusted. Indeed, one can trace in history that this adjustment has not been reached in many cases, and the consequence then has been the failing of a particular phase of civilization. Many people, and many very able people, believe that this phase has been reached to-day in Western Europe. I do not know if this is so or not, but one certainly cannot accept such a view without making a hard fight to show that it is wrong. We may be beaten, but we must fight. That is obvious.

The great danger just now seems to me to be that we may drift. A large section of the community is 'fed up', and at a time when energy is most needed it is most difficult to achieve. A large section of the community in Ireland is drifting. During a recent short stay in Dublin I was struck by one outstanding feature—the large amount of mendicity to be met. I have seen nothing like it for years! Most of it, however, could have been spelled 'mendacity', a trifling change of one little letter, yet what a difference! Is not this symbolic of drift and lack of will on the part of a large number of people? It seemed to me deplorable, and in England to-day, even in northern industrial towns where unemployment is most rife, no such miserable begging is encountered. Yet the distress in England to-day is incomparably worse than in Ireland, both in quantity and degree. England is fighting a hard fight and long after the war. Is Ireland? She may be. I hope so; but the evidence of it is not striking. Dublin is depressing, and the obvious decay and squalor seem to have affected the people also.

The thoughts in the previous paragraph bring me to a subject of importance to those who love Dublin. I have recently been reading a book which is one of the most fascinating and absorbing that I have ever

read. I refer to *The Story of Mankind*, by Hendrik Van Loon. The title is self-explanatory. A large part of the subject-matter is a demonstration of how the social and economic conditions evolved in Europe from the earliest times down to the present day. The review of architecture and art is on very broad lines, while at the same time wonderfully clear.

I have always emphasized the fact that before architectural history can be a live and comprehensible thing to any student, a good general knowledge of social history is essential.

I would commend this book to every student and art school in the country, and believe that many people of mature years would gain inspiration and a refreshing of vision from its study.

Art grows as fresh demands are made of it by a social system, and although numerous attempts have been made in the past to impart a fully developed style here and there, it is seldom that this was successful. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that it never has been successful.

I can hear some one saying, 'Nonsense! What about the Moors and Spain?' Well, the answer is that this was not a case of an imported style, in a proper sense. A new population arose suddenly, and an entirely new social order grew with great rapidity, oriental in its principal aspects, and therefore demanding an oriental architecture. This was a growth to meet the new social conditions—an unusually rapid one if you like, but still a growth. An important factor also was that the climate of southern Spain was much more akin to Africa than it was to that of northern Europe; and a style of architecture must, of course, be influenced largely by considerations of climate. This is perhaps a truism, but, indeed, it is very often forgotten.

I have seen a good many suggestions as to the style in which future public buildings in Dublin should

be built. Amongst these there have been several indicating that a revival of Irish Romanesque is the right thing.

One can quite understand such a proposal being put forward just now, during a period when national feeling has reached a stage when accomplishment, or partial accomplishment, has taken the place of political endeavour. It is natural that the pendulum should swing too far. One can see why this is, while at the same time one is sorry that it should be so. Extremes of thought not based on a sound foundation are like an inverted pyramid which may be held upright for a short time by a feat of energetic mental balance. Some day, however, over it must topple.

To one like myself, outside the toil and stress of Irish life at the moment, while at the same time keenly interested in it, there are symptoms of this overswinging of the pendulum. It so happens that I have a considerable Irish correspondence, and it is a constant source of amusement or distress (according to one's mood) to perpetually be urged to learn a dead language. One also gets official communications in which little tags and scraps such as ' Dear sir ' or ' Yours faithfully ' are inserted in Irish—the remainder of the document being in English.

One feels that these little things are gestures ; such as a small boy might make to his old nurse on returning from his first term at a preparatory school—a sort of wiping his boots on the nursery floor formerly sacred to slippers—a nursery now turned into a schoolroom and which seems to the boy to be of infinite freedom. One believes these gestures to be inspired by these schoolboy motives, and can sympathize accordingly ; if they were of a more adult nature than this, one would despair. Ireland has got a difficult enough row to hoe in the immediate future, both spiritually and commercially. Any such stones in the path of the plough

as these are going to weaken the line of the furrow, and reduce the harvest accordingly.

Let me again consider the idea of an Irish Romanesque art and see whether it is founded on a solid basis, or a merely sentimental one—a gesture on the above lines. In the first place, was there ever a school of Irish Romanesque which was distinct from the rest of Europe? So far as my knowledge goes, there was not. Irish Romanesque is no more indigenous than is Irish Gothic or Irish Renaissance. It was a growth from simple forms that had come from the East. A detail here, a trick of plan there, may be found in ancient buildings in Ireland which are perhaps more usual here than elsewhere; but it has been well established that all the main features of the style are to be found wherever remains exist over Western Europe. I have discussed this with most of the leading authorities at different times and have never heard it disputed by any sound Irish scholar or archaeologist. I certainly have heard people state quite a contrary opinion to this on many occasions; they were, however, in the main cheerful enthusiasts who had studied the Irish side of history at the expense of that of the rest of Europe: a fault too prevalent in this island. In my own book on *Georgia,* I reproduced photos of the ninth-century work out there, which none but the greatest expert could say were not British or Irish. Even the late Professor Scott, perhaps the keenest of all Irish Romanesque advocates of recent years, never contended that this was a distinct school—the most he advocated was, if I interpret his views correctly, that church work in the future could more logically and artistically develop from that style than from Gothic: a contention for which a strong case can, of course, be made.

Now let us take the three tests—the suitability tests—and see if a Romanesque style applied to modern

buildings (other than ecclesiastical) will respond to these.

The Romanesque building was of the most simple nature in regard to plan. It was designed for a single very direct purpose and was nearly always of one story. A modern commercial building demands a large number of floors and brilliant lighting. The fenestration becomes therefore our main problem. In Venice, where the Romanesque style was used more largely perhaps than elsewhere, in buildings other than those for which it had originally grown up, one can see failure on every hand. I admit freely that there are qualities which make for picturesqueness. What these are I can best illustrate by the following story. It chanced that I was sitting with a friend in the Silver Grill in Salisbury, and the window at which we sat overlooked the well-known Poultry Cross. My friend, a fine poet and distinguished writer, but with little knowledge of architecture beyond that of the ordinary well-educated and travelled man, remarked what a beautiful thing the cross was. I said, ' It is nothing of the kind—it is badly designed, shockingly proportioned —in fact, it is a perfect outrage.' He was somewhat surprised and asked me why I said these things.

I asked him to imagine the cross freshly put up in brand-new stone, and without any of the softening effects of time, and without such a picturesque background. I pointed out to him how ugly its lines really were, and that what he was admiring was the romantic atmosphere suggested by its blurred edges, and moss, and lichen-tinted stones. It seemed a bit of history, and called up a pageant to one's mind of knights and ladies, worthy burghers, and men-at-arms. My friend thought for a moment and admitted there was much truth in my contention.

Now, I say that the same criticism applies to the Romanesque Venetian palace. The picturesque is a

matter of romance in these and not of line, and the mind being influenced both by suggestion and by the vision of the eye, it is a matter of hard thinking at times to say why one likes a thing at all.

I am certain, therefore, that the Venetian palace would not stand reproduction out of its setting in ordinary stone of the North. I think that this makes out a fairly good case against a Romanesque building passing our first test.

The very nature of Romanesque is a somewhat rugged thing in which the size of windows and other similar features play the chief role. If a commercial or public building were designed in this style it would of necessity become a mass of windows (required in this climate) and silly little piers. The design could not hang together.

One could easily enlarge on this point of view, but the failure to suit this climate seems to me to be so obvious that to do so would be to flog a dead horse.

A modern building has for the most part to be broken up into a series of small apartments and many stories. Romanesque is essentially a style of breadth and spaciousness. These two opposing demands cannot be reconciled.

The material must be of any nature to suit; in Romanesque, stone broadly treated is demanded. Can this be done in the interior of a modern building? Of course not. The point need not be laboured. I hope that those who have seriously put forward a plea for the adoption of Irish Romanesque for public buildings may be induced to reconsider their views. The public buildings of Dublin, built as they practically all were during the eighteenth century, were second to none in the British Isles. There is a strong tradition to maintain and moreover a line to work on which fits in exactly with the same broad logical principles which are being

applied by the most scholarly of American and Western European opinion to modern architecture.

After this talk of towns and buildings, let us think a little of the country.

A good deal has been written of recent years on the question of the spoiling of the country-side. Several societies have vigorously voiced their protests against the horrible, ill-designed small houses that have for some time been dotted so freely throughout the length and breadth of the land. To-day they are more in evidence than ever. Many charming villages, numerous old towns, have been spoiled, the approaches to others vulgarized, by this thoughtless and sordid commercialism.

To anyone who, like the writer, has occasion to cover a good deal of rural ground in the course of the year, and who cares for such things, it is obvious that unless drastic steps are taken in the very near future Ireland (and England too) will soon have lost its charm and character.

The building trade, in so far as the small house is concerned, has prostituted itself. No one of taste will deny that fact. The question is, can a remedy be found? This is not easy to answer.

Let us consider very briefly the causes that are at work to produce the low standard of the present day. There is still a very large demand for the small house. Numerous builders are doing speculative work in this type of building, and large numbers of these are men with no taste, no tradition of good work behind them; men who are in the work from purely mercenary motives. Profit is their only consideration. Pride in their work counts not at all.

The usual procedure in such cases is for the builder to get a set of plans drawn by some one—sometimes an architect; often an office-boy. These are skinned down to the lowest specification which will pass the local authorities' by-laws. In eighty per cent of the

cases the plans are aesthetically beneath contempt. There is one ' office-boy ' elevation, and the other three are walls with some window and door openings in them. The draughtsman gets his couple of guineas, the builder his fifty or sixty pounds profit, and there is an end to the matter. Another blot on the country-side !

One does not wish to belittle the efforts which are being made by several societies concerned with such matters. Those are excellent so far as they go. But they do not go nearly far enough. In the case of many villages and rural areas it is almost too late to do anything. They are already spoilt by vile jerry cottages with pink asbestos roofs, ill-designed bays, and all the other well-known characteristics. The architectural societies display an apathy that is most disheartening. Architects and builders should be leading public opinion in this to-day. They are not doing so.

If registration of architects materializes it will probably help matters a little. It will help to eliminate the office-boy plans. Nothing, however, at present can stop the builder from altering the elevations (as approved by the local authority) to suit his own taste. Legislation is needed on this. What is the use of a builder getting plans from an architect and then altering them as seems well to him ? Every good provincial architect has suffered from this. He has seen a decent design mutilated over and over again.

The first step is to make it impossible for a builder to alter materially an elevation as approved on the plans lodged with the local authority. This rule should be included in the by-laws. The next step is for every local authority to have an art committee whose duty it would be to censor the design after the surveyor had approved it on structural grounds. It would be easy in most places to get together such an advisory body of three or four members. It might not be perfect, but it would be a tremendous safeguard. The mere fact of

its existence would be an incentive to the builder to go to a competent designer and to adhere to his designs.

It is true there are numerous objections to such a scheme. One obvious at once is that the aesthetic standard would vary greatly throughout the country. But the answer to this is that it already does so. Better, indeed, that it should vary on a higher plane than as at present. The good architect and the honest builder with pride in their work have nothing to fear from such legislation. The bad architect and the purely commercial builder would be pulled up. The general standard of taste would be raised rapidly, and one can see that in a decade or two the duties of such committees as are suggested here would be very slight indeed.

Unless some such restrictions are imposed the beauty of our country-side will soon be a thing of the past. Our good villages will have vanished and be as much a memory as the stage-coach or sedan-chair. With the cities, especially the industrial cities, I am not here concerned. In the present phase of civilization the problem of their buildings, especially the vast, mean, residential areas, is one beyond present-day solution. It is doubtful if it will ever be solved The rural and smaller urban districts, however, can be dealt with. What is needed is strong, combined effort by the numerous societies whose functions are partially or wholly concerned with these things.

Ireland is, on the whole, more free from the grosser acts of vandalism spoiling the country than England. This is largely because there is not the same amount of expansion of interests in proportion to the population. But it is important that the towns, villages and the country-side should be preserved and kept free from ugly buildings. It is true that Irish villages have not the charm of those of England—there is rarely anything of architectural interest to be found : but the grouping and colour is generally picturesque and in harmony with

the landscape. I remember Hugh Lane, after a tour in Kerry, coming back and saying that the farms and cottages should all be painted in bright colours instead of being whitewashed as they are. I do not think I agree—there is, of course, a strong case to be made for the more generous use of colour, but the thatch and whitewash of the West seem to fit in, and I should be sorry to see a change. Ireland's main attraction to the eye is in her scenery. She can afford a simple and austere method of building. Except in the Midlands there are mountains everywhere, and lakes and rivers sufficient in themselves to satisfy anyone with a love of beauty. Anyone who has lived in the country parts of Ireland must understand the feelings of those of Irish birth and bringing-up who are forced to live elsewhere. The call of the country is an extraordinarily strong one—stronger, one believes, than that of any other part of the British Isles.

Some years ago it happened that I came from Leitrim to stay in an English industrial city. I wrote the following verses at the time :

THE LITTLE HILLS O' LEITRIM

My attic room is cold and grey above the narrow street,
And up the winding stair there comes no sound of friendly feet ;
I'm dreaming of old voices, and I think I smell the peat
In the house among the little hills o' Leitrim.

It's many weary years since I have seen my country's skies,
And heard across the waste of bog the mournful plover's cries,
But there beneath the kindly sod my heart deep buried lies
In a grave among the little hills o' Leitrim.

Acushla, but you were a queen of beauty sweet and rare,
And I the proudest boy of all beside you at the fair ;
I close my eyes, I see you coming down the pass-way there
To the farm, among the little hills o' Leitrim.

I mind the summer evenings when the scythe was put away,
And all the boys and girls came in from saving of the hay,
And dancing on the road itself, to tunes blind Mike would play,
And the moonlight shining on the hills o' Leitrim.

I'm toiling in a stranger's land with ne'er a friendly face,
A stranger, too, they look on me, a man of foreign race ;
But tho' my body's toiling, faith my heart's not in the place
But back among the little hills o' Leitrim.

My attic room is cold and grey, above the narrow street,
And up the winding stair there comes no sound of friendly feet.
I'm dreaming of old voices, and I think I smell the peat
In the house among the little hills o' Leitrim.

CHAPTER X

SOME MEMORIES OF RURAL IRELAND

The Land Act—Surveys—The Reeks—'Little Billie'—A Curious Man—Solitary People—Island Farms—The Piper's Hole — A Guess at a Profession — Women's Convention — Synge and the Celts—Ireland and Literature

IT was my father's practice to take duty at a country rectory every summer holiday in some different part of Ireland. Consequently my family obtained considerable experience of different parts of the country, and made rather a wide circle of friends and acquaintances. Two of my brothers indeed met the ladies who subsequently became their wives on one such holiday.

As is usual with large families, any local sport available became our sport, and by the time I was twenty I had swum, bathed, fished, climbed, shot and ridden in many remote places in company with my brothers and our friends.

Soon after I started in practice the measure known as the Wyndham Act, dealing with the sale of land, was passed. Under this Act it was necessary for a landlord selling to his tenants to have a complete estate map prepared. I was lucky enough to secure a great deal of this work, which took me all over the country for some two or three years, from the north of Donegal to the southernmost part of Kerry. Sometimes one stayed at a country house—more often at a local inn. Sometimes one was able to work from a centre such as Killarney or Gweedore, where a comfortable hotel was

available, but this was unusual, and one generally had to put up with a village pub. I have knocked about a little in most countries of Europe, and with the possible exception of the inns of northern Spain, those of Ireland of twenty years ago were the worst to be found anywhere. The food was invariably very limited in choice and ill-cooked and served. The sitting-room was a nightmare, a bathroom rarely existed (when it did there was never hot water), and the sanitary arrangements were crude or *nil*. The commercial traveller in Ireland whose lot takes him to the smaller towns and villages must be either a very callous or a very desperate man. Were he not, he would throw up his job and become a pig-drover, or emigrate.

However, there were many compensations. One met a lot of interesting people of all classes, and of course saw some of the most beautiful scenery that the world has to show, and saw it under unusual conditions. To have walked the great ridge of the McGillicuddy Reeks under Alpine conditions of snow and ice is surely a rare and wonderful experience, and one which will always stay in the memory. The memory of a twenty-mile drive before dawn, half-frozen on an outside car, and the return journey after dark with a week's discomfort before and after at the worst pub in the world—all these have long since vanished among the forgotten things, unless the depths are stirred for the deliberate disinterment. Those days on the Reeks will stay among the joyful things of life so long as life lasts.

It was during this stay in Kerry that I met the original of ' Little Billie '. I had been at an hotel, now a well-known golf-centre, at that time patronized by bagmen and the multitude of civil servants that swarmed like seagulls over the bogs and hills of Ireland. I had been for a week in the company of a well-known Dublin solicitor, agent for the estate I was mapping. We were playing billiards on a table which might have been the

original of Gilbert's Lyric, and with our umbrellas up —the roof leaked freely. There entered to us a queer little figure clothed in an ulster reaching to his feet, and with a large black wideawake hat. He was a friendly and sociable person, a local artist, and after a whisky or two he told us most of his life-story, and an amazingly varied life it had been. One rather suspected a particularly vivid imagination. Many of his stories were of his love-affairs while an art-student in Paris. Finally he remarked that he was the original Little Billie of 'Trilby'. To this date I do not know if he told us the truth or not. Certainly his facts as he told them were circumstantial and his story convincing. His age was about right, and it seemed clear beyond doubt that he had known Du Maurier well. I like to believe he was who he claimed to be—I never bothered to find out afterwards, or to verify any of the things he told me. To tell the truth, I was always afraid I might find out he had exaggerated—lied is a hard word and one I do not care about—and my illusion that I have spent the evening with so illustrious a person shattered. It is often wiser not to bring too critical an eye to bear on one's friends, or to analyse their motives too closely.

During my wanderings in Ireland I met, naturally, some other odd people. One of the most curious men I ever met, and also the most happy, was one who lived most strictly by rule. He had eliminated the tyrannies of life save one only, and this a pleasant one of his own making; obeying this little god which he had set up was, indeed, the source of the keenest enjoyment to him. Incidentally it kept him in splendid health; and in that it differed from most of our tyrannies, such as motor-cars, butlers, and subscriptions to various clubs and societies. I had pulled in, after a week's vague tramping, to an hotel which I did not much care about, not far from a certain well-known tourist centre in the Kerry mountains. A fall of rain drove me to seek

shelter instead of getting into the next valley, as had been my breakfast intention. I sat down to dinner and was soon in the middle of pleasant mountain talk, of the kind which one so easily starts a thousand feet over sea-level. It's a curious fact, this freedom of speech in the mountains. It is perfectly true that many a reticent or dull man, whom one would avoid like poison if one chanced into the same carriage on the Tube, becomes the best of good fellows, who himself expands, and causes others to be absolutely brilliant, when he gets to this enchanted level. In the British Isles the expansion process takes place low down; perhaps because there are no great heights, and one unconsciously is guided by a sense of proportion. I have often seen it happen thus at a thousand feet over sea-level in Ireland. Those who have struggled up a mountain, in high places, with ice-axe in hand, to eat their Christmas turkey and cut their Christmas steps on icy faces will understand.

I have met but one exception to this law, and he was this curious man. (I subsequently learnt he was a contractor.) I noticed him first that evening at dinner. He sat by himself, and did not utter a word to a soul; and after dinner, when we sat in the jolly blue haze of the smoking-room, he entrenched himself in a creaky chair, with a new *Harper*, and took no interest in the good talk that flowed around him. He had a closely-cut moustache, deep-set eyes, and red worsted socks; the suit he wore was an old grey tweed. I guessed his age to be fifty-two or thereabouts.

He retired to bed early and when he had gone I inquired of my neighbour on the sofa, an informative cleric, who he was and whence he came. No one, I found, knew much about him; but every one was exceedingly anxious to tell what they knew. It appeared he spent his time wandering through the mountains of Ireland. He would stay at a place for a

month or so, generally choosing somewhere at the foot of a small peak, with a good track ascent. He would then ascend this peak several times a day, but never missed a meal. He never spoke to anyone. He was believed to be well off. I heard all this many times, and much speculation besides, but these were all the facts that I could gather, except that he had been a building contractor in a large way in his youth. I stayed three or four days, and watched this man, who had filled me with a burning desire to know who and what he was. Accordingly, having heard that he made his first ascent of the mountain immediately at the rear of the hotel before breakfast, I rose one morning before dawn and strolled up a thousand feet or so, and sat down to see the sun rise. I had not long to wait. The rays of the sun had hardly gilded the eastern face of the mountains when I saw my quarry a short way below, making remarkably good time up the track. As he came level I raised my hand in salutation and said, 'Good morning.'

He looked at me and made the ordinary reply, but did not pause, seeing which, I jumped to my feet and went behind him up the rocks, talking as I went.

'I'm very sorry, sir,' he said. 'I can't stop; it would upset my whole day. I've got to go up this mountain three times every day, and it's most important to keep exact time.'

'I see," I replied.

'Yes,' he said, 'the summit of this mountain is 1,666·3 feet over the steps of the hotel, and three times that is five thousand feet, do you see?'

I did not, but I said I did.

'Yes,' he continued, 'five thousand feet a day; that's what I do; just fit it in between meals.'

I again said that I saw.

'Do you see this coat, sir?' he said. 'No lining, no

time to get a lining. You may have noticed something unusual about the buttons ? '

' It has none,' I suggested.

' Quite right. I use string instead ; saves time.'

After a pause, I said, ' Do you live here, may I ask ? '

' Live here ! No, sir, I came here three months ago for lunch and the food was so good I said, " Waiter, I'm going to stay here." Since then I haven't had a bit of food I could eat ! Live here ! No, sir.'

The sun was now well up, and the morning, clear and glorious, tempted me, so I ventured a question : ' Do you mind if we sit down for a little and look at the view ? '

' Sorry ; can't possibly do it,' he jerked out.

' Would you not make an exception to your rule and stay for five minutes ? ' I asked.

' No, sir, can't do it,' and he was off like a shot.

I waited an hour, and he returned at the same headlong gait ; I again followed in close pursuit.

' Take care,' he shouted. ' These rocks want to be taken carefully. It's all right for me—I've got the trick of coming down a mountain.' I only remarked that I thought I could manage it. Presently he slowed down : ' I haven't been in London for twenty-four years.'

I expressed the expected surprise, and asked how he managed for clothes.

' Write to the stores every three years, and tell them to send a pair of knickerbockers for a man twelve stone, and five feet nine tall.'

He rushed on again, and I followed to where the angle eased and we could walk side by side.

' What do you do in the winter ? ' I ventured

' Riviera, San Remo, Bordighera, or somewhere else where I can get five thousand feet a day ; that's my rule, sir, and I haven't missed it for twenty-four years,

except when I'm in a train; can't do it then, very unfortunate.'

We arrived at the hotel; he was quite fresh, and went on talking.

'I've got house property in the south of England; just come in for it. My solicitors are always bothering me to go home, say they can't do anything till I come back.'

'I suppose you are going?' I said.

'Going? Not a bit of it. How could I? No time. No, sir, I don't care a hang what happens to that property.'

I felt a little discouraged, and we smoked in silence for a while.

'Allow me to tell you, sir,' he jerked out suddenly, 'that you're the only man who has ever been for a walk with me; no one ever dares to speak to me.'

I expressed appreciation of the honour.

'Don't make a fuss about it, sir, but you certainly should know it—good morning,' and he was gone.

I meditated for a while. This man with his overwhelming idea was, I believe, perfectly happy. Friends, lawsuits, property, nothing interested him at all; he was content with life so long as he could do five thousand feet a day. I found out afterwards he was sixty or a little more, sixty and not a care in the world. I wonder what will be the end of his life? A sudden slip, perhaps, and nothing more for him. No hideous paraphernalia of nurses, doctors, and other tormentors. Sixty, and not a care in life, lucky fellow; and yet he had been a contractor!

It is noticeable throughout the ages that it has been the custom among men to place their dwellings in proximity to each other. The Egyptian civilization, the Greek and Roman, all had this factor in common.

The inhabitants of Western Europe in medieval times carried out the same idea. The villages and small

towns which grew up at that time all go to prove that man likes to see other dwellings from the windows of his own. The Kaffir kraal—the Maori settlement—the villages and farms of Tibet tell the same tale of this desire to see what your neighbour is about. A simple human desire, perhaps childish, but very real among people of yesterday and to-day. One meets exceptions—Robinson Crusoe, for instance, lived for many years in solitude. I forget how many years, but it was for a period which is a large slice out of the life of a normal man. Of course I am perfectly aware that Robinson was a fictitious character, and that his solitude was involuntary. Despite these facts, he may be taken as an example. Carlyle is another. Carlyle is not a fictitious character—far from it. Neither was his exile voluntary.

These two, and the few others like Diogenes or St. Kevin, who regard aloofness as their chief blessing, were exceptional and probably intolerable people. They did, however, at least choose their solitude—it was deliberate (except in Robinson's case).

There exists, however, another class which arose, as I think, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. They were almost entirely composed of landed gentry, nobility and successful merchants. To show their superiority they built themselves large houses far from the dwellings of their fellows, and lived their isolated lives in a so-called privacy, in reality in an artificial and somewhat pathetic aloofness. They cut themselves off from humanity, and no one can do this and remain sane. No one can do this and remain happy.

One sees the reaction now—the inheritors of such places have sold them to be hospitals or other institutions or have left them to fall down; while they go into business, or, if they are sufficiently well off, to the Lido and Monte Carlo. The last class not, perhaps, standing

for anything very good or that counts for much, but it has at least the desire of association with its fellows, and the wish to dwell in proximity to others.

Seldom, if indeed ever, has any class been so aloof from the life of its country as was that of the Irish aristocracy of the eighteenth century. The reasons for this were many and complicated ; but I doubt that Russia in its pre-revolution period had an upper class so remote from its peasants as had Ireland during the time of the Georges. This condition obtained in many districts up to a generation or so ago.

To get into real touch with peasant life was a difficult business. To lead politically, like Parnell and others of his class, was a different matter. It was rather an attitude of benevolent autocracy : the human tie, the intimate word and the friendly touch between those at the top and those in the lower strata were, one can see, non-existent except in some very rare cases.

The remoteness from civilized human interests in part of Ireland was remarkable. One did not need to travel far from Dublin to perceive this. I tell a story which I think will show the attitude of mind as found in an intelligent man well within one hundred miles of Dublin. He had never met his landlord—his life had been lived exclusively among his own class.

Far out in the Bog of Allen, in the poor, agricultural country between Maryborough and Philipstown, there are a number of ' island farms ', pieces of reclaimed land that rise, hill-shaped, out of the bog. They are often a mile or more from any road or laneway, with a rough track as the only means of access.

The life led by the people of these farms is extraordinarily monotonous, and their gravity of mind is reflected in eyes which the occasional visitor from the outside world never fails to startle.

If you trace the history of one of these tenants, you will frequently get back to a grandfather evicted in

post-famine days who subsequently settled on the most promising ground nearest to his old farm.

One winter I happened to spend a good deal of time in the neighbourhood of these bog farms. My work brought me into contact with the occupants, in whom I found all the charm of solitary people, and more than the usual amount of that reticence characteristic of the Irish peasantry. There was one particularly fine old fellow, seventy years of age, who entertained me many an evening with the experience of his long life. He was talkative at nights but he always went outside a question and took an impersonal point of view. As a story-teller he had great force and dramatic power.

One wild March evening, when sleety rain was driving almost horizontally across the wide, open bog, and sullen, ragged clouds, drifting low, obscured in their folds the line of green hills to the north, I turned aside to Hanlon's cottage to shelter and drink a cup of tea before facing a four-mile tramp back to the local inn. I found Hanlon and his daughter sitting before the fire.

I had just noticed when going across a very swampy part of the bog, where I had to jump from tussock to tussock, a large hole twenty feet across and of great apparent depth ; and now I asked Hanlon how it had come there.

' We call it the " Piper's Hole ",' he replied, ' and it was in my grandfather's time that it got the name by account of the queer death of a tramping piper that he met in it.' After a while he drew his pipe out of his mouth. ' A quare death,' he said ; ' a quare death in a quare place. What I'm telling you's true, mind. When me grandfather came here there was only an old turf cabin in it where a widow-man lived by himself. I disremember the name he went by, but his woman had died of a sickness, and he was lonesome living in it all

by himself, and my grandfather got it cheap, and as well as being lonesome he was afraid.'

I asked of what. Hanlon lowered his voice. 'The wife couldn't rest aisy, and she walked after her death, and the poor man often seen her, and wasn't able to work the little place with the dread that was in him. Aye, and there was more than that, too, for she wasn't content to walk, but used to go round at night on the bog with a green light, and waving to travellers to follow her till she got them out on the lonely places, and she'd go out of their sight, and many a one was lost through her.'

'A sort of will-o'-the-wisp?' I suggested.

'I've heard them called that, too,' Hanlon replied. 'But, anyway, every one round the place for miles got in a great dread of this part of the bog. At the time me grandfather lived in this place, the light was only seen round the hole, and all walked the bog passes day and night without hindrance, and no one had been lost for a long time, and the story was nearly forgotten. But once there was going to be a grand wedding at River Lyons house. Ye know the old walls of it stand where I showed ye yesterday, and nothing would do the old man, Mr. Wilmot, but he must have a piper to play at his son's wedding. Well, it happened that there was word come that a great piper was stopping over on the other side of Philipstown, and word was sent to him to come over to the big house to play on the evening before the marriage. Well, how it came to be I don't know, but he was late crossing the bog, and, being a stranger, knew nothing of the hole and had no dread of the green light, so he axed the shortest way, and was tould in Philipstown. It was near dark on a November day when he started, and he was seen by some chaps heading across the bog, with his pipes under his arm, and his head down to the wind that was blowing at the time.' Hanlon paused. 'No one saw him again,'

he said at length; 'leastways, with the breath in him.'

'What happened to him?' I asked.

'Well, no one rightly knew what happened him, but that summer there came a great drought, and the bog was very dry, and all the old holes in it lower than they had been for years, and one of the men near the bog had reason to go out on the bog one day after strayed cattle, and he came to the piper's hole and he saw the water low in it. There was a kind of ledge just under the water, and when he looked on that he saw what was like a man on it. He went back and got help, and one of them went down with a rope, and sure enough it was the body of the piper, with the pipes still in his hand.'

'And how did they suppose he had got into the hole?'

'Well, no man can say that, but the hole was a mile off his track, and the pass he was on was well marked, and the man was sober when he left the town, and, anyway, there he was in the hole, and that's how it came by its name.'

I saw Hanlon had more to tell, and I waited.

'I don't know how it is,' he went on, 'but the old people say that a place of death is unlucky. I don't know if that's so, but that hole has brought misfortune ever since. Me grandfather lost cattle, and me father after him, and I've lost many a young beast, all in the hole, and one was often missed out of the herd and found in the hole next day. Two of them got in last winter, when they were pastured well several miles away. In the night they broke out, and the next day I got them in it.'

'Drowned?'

'Drowned dead.'

'But did you never fence it? It's a small place, and could be done easily.'

'Fence it?' said Hanlon. 'Fence it! Sure, I tried

putting rails and all sorts round it, but no fence will stay there. I've fenced it five, or six, or seven times, and always I soon found it broke down, and half the rails floating in the water of the hole. I'll never fence it again. The last time the fence was put up, I said to myself I'd watch it each night, thinking it was one of the lads around, playing a trick on me. Well, I went and sat down beside the clump of sallies ye saw by the hole, and after an hour or two I was sitting half asleep when I heard a splash, and ran over to the railing, and I saw a big gap where the rails had been pulled up, and put into the hole. I was turning round to see if I could see anyone, when I felt a pull at me coat, and before I could catch hold or steady myself I fell back into the hole. I believe I let a roar, and down I went into the water. I came up to the top, and, as luck had it, one of the rails was stuck over the edge of the hole, and I caught a hold and dragged myself out, and nothing hindered me.'

'You must have been pretty well scared?' I said.

'Out of my skin, I was, and I just got out and took to me heels and away home as fast as I could belt, and when I looked back from the door there was a green light waving out near the hole.'

We sat in silence for some minutes, and at length I asked Hanlon how he accounted for such things.

'I don't know what's in it at all,' he answered. 'But I know one thing, and that is, cattle or no cattle, ye'll not get me going near the hole at night again. No, not if I lost every beast on the place.'

Shortly after this I was again visiting the same estate, and got into the train, taking my seat opposite a rather ordinary-looking little man.

We had been facing each other for an hour or two as the Limerick express hummed through the dark. His face interested me, and I had been watching him (not rudely, I hope), trying to size him up. His age was

perhaps forty, or a little more. His face was rather square, with a determined chin in which there was a cleft, and his strongly-marked eyebrows covered deep-set eyes, which were the eyes of a dreamer, but also of one whose dreams were likely to materialize. Something about him, I cannot say what, had convinced me that he was a politician, and Socialism seemed to me to be the only outlet in politics for a man with his eyes.

We sat opposite each other at dinner and began to talk, after some ordinary ice-breaking, and in an hour were old friends. We had touched on everything, both thoroughly interested, when we worked round by chance to the subject of how different forms of work gradually stamp a man's exterior.

'I have made,' said my companion, 'a hobby of this, and believe I can nearly always tell.'

'I have made no hobby of it,' said I, 'but have also considerable belief in my power of placing a man.'

'Good!' he said. 'Let us each say what the other is.'

Now, I had that day walked across a mountain, and had not had time to change my clothes, and was still in ragged knickerbockers, flannel shirt, and nailed boots. My hands were red and cut from a week on the rocks, I had no tie—indeed, I said to myself, this man can have little to guide him to the fact that I am an architect.

'Well,' I said, as he looked me over and tapped the table with his long fingers, 'have you placed me?'

'I think so—you are an artist of some sort. I am not quite certain, but I should say an architect.'

'Well,' I said, 'that's rather extraordinary. How did you guess? Did I say anything that gave you a clue?'

'Nothing definite, but from your general tone I saw that you were concerned with creative art.'

'That,' I said, 'I can more or less understand, but how did you come to pin it down so exactly?'

'Oh, you gave me several clues.'

'For instance?'

'Well, I noticed when I was talking to you just now that you kept running your thumb down the moulding of that panel, and every time you got to a certain place you frowned as though irritated by something. Well, it is not a proof of abnormal reasoning powers upon my part to see that that moulding annoyed you. You are obviously not a carpenter, and the only other man whose knowledge of mouldings would be such that he would be irritated by one he did not like is an architect.'

'Was that all?' I asked.

'No,' he said. 'Your hands told me a lot—they are obviously accustomed to holding small instruments, and I had already decided you were an artist—otherwise dentist might have suggested itself.'

'Oh, Lord, not that!'

He laughed. 'No, I shouldn't have said dentist.'

'Thank you; I am relieved,' said I. 'Now I will say what you are.'

'Do'—and he lay back in his corner and puffed at his excellent cigar.

'You are,' I said, 'at least, I think you are, a politician—a Member of Parliament, and a Socialist. How's that?'

He chuckled. 'Not out, not by a long way.'

'Then,' I said, 'you are a third-rate actor—or a mollah!—I give it up.'

'I make lifts,' he said.

'You make what!'

'Lifts—hydraulic lifts.'

'You're an appalling misfit.'

'What made you say that?' he said. 'My eyes, I suppose?'

'Yes, your eyes.'

'Yes, I've got absurd eyes for an engineer—I mean the sort of engineer I am. The Nile dam now, or a railway over the Rockies—that would be different.'

'Yes, you have; but tell me, have you written verses much, or sailed an open boat? If you started with those eyes you'd probably have written poetry, and if you sailed much, you'd have finished up with those eyes.'

'I spoiled plenty of paper when I was a boy. But you haven't got it quite right—I mean, about poets and sailors having the same eyes; very nearly, but not quite—I don't think I can put it into words, but there's a difference; they're not quite the same.'

'No?'

'No, not quite. You see, the sailor's constantly looking at far-off things; so is the poet; but the sailor's are physical and the poet's are not; and this, I think, produces that look in the eyes—but between the two there is an intangible difference. Of course, they both differ entirely from the commonplace eyes, the eyes of the man in the street.'

We smoked silently for a little while, and then he continued: 'All the great men in history, soldiers, statesmen, poets, and painters—I mean the really great ones—have all been dreamers, I think.'

'Yes,' I said. 'Of course, without the dreamer you get no movement, no change; the visionary, the dreamer, sees what seems to him to be something that will improve life, and then he probably starts out by whatever means are in his power to bring it about.'

After a pause my companion remarked, 'The fact of his thinking it desirable doesn't justify it, though, but even if the thing in itself is not justifiable, or even desirable, I agree that the dreamer is the only man who makes for progress. An occasional real creator comes along and moves things, and the rest of us follow like

sheep. Architecture is a typical example of this. The great aim of present-day thought,' he went on, 'is the habit of labelling and classifying; for instance, take the ordinary unimaginative person talking to a child. "What's your name? How old are you? How many brothers and sisters have you got? Do you like your lessons? What are you going to be when you grow up?" You know what I mean: the child is a child, that is enough. There is no question of individuality. He or she is a child and must be spoken to as a child.'

'Yes,' I said. 'This kind of person does not stop at children; they bring the tabulated form of conversation into everything. Take, for instance, a member of the Junior Bar, the members of which, I am assured, are very intelligent men and great diners-out. Watch one of them talking to the woman he has taken in to dinner. If she is pretty he talks to her of herself—if possible he goes on from this and makes a mild sort of dinner-table love to her. If she is only moderately well-favoured, he talks to her of himself; while, if she is plain, he talks to her of Bernard Shaw. These are the rules of conversation observed by intelligent young men.'

'And women?'

'Women only observe one rule at conversation—they try and make you love something about them—if not their looks, then their feminine qualities, or, as a last resource, their intellect.'

'Some want you to love all three,' he suggested.

'Then God help you! If you do, you'll be in love; if she's married, she'll probably run away with you.'

'If she's not?'

'Oh, then you've some chance.'

'You mean, you'll find each other out before you are hopelessly committed.'

'Precisely.'

'You're a cynical devil!'
'Possibly,' I said.

. . . . .

Synge has written of peasant life in Ireland in a way that is more sympathetic than that of any other contemporary writer. Synge's main fault (and he has many) is that he is too much a bookmaker, and puts his matter down on paper in a highly concentrated form. He crammed incidents which might have occurred in a man's lifetime into the happenings of a week. This gives a wrong picture to the reader. I am not finding fault here with his genius; few people can have had more pleasure from his work than I have had, but I must admit this fault in his general lay-out. Perhaps it is the early journalistic part of him cropping up. But I like to see a few untidy ends—a few i's not dotted and a few t's not crossed in the work of a writer of his distinction. W. H. Hudson and Synge remind me of each other every time I read the books of either. Had Synge been a naturalist I can easily think of him writing with the broad vision that Hudson had—the broad interests. Synge, having been trained as a journalist, is narrow and concentrated, and Synge never compares the Irish Celts with the Celts of Scotland or Wales. He tells you a particular thing or series of things about a group of people. Perhaps it is because he was largely a dramatist and was concerned with action. Hudson was not very much concerned with action, except that of animals—he was immensely concerned with ideas and principles.

Synge says little of the Celt—Hudson a lot. One of the many shrewd observations he made is worth a note here: 'The Cornish are no doubt very much like the other Celts in Britain; but in some things, with one of which alone I am concerned here—to wit, the imaginative faculty—these separate branches of

the race have diverged very widely indeed. The old literatures of Ireland and Wales live to show it, and in Ireland, at all events, this fountain of inspiration has never ceased to flow. It is flowing copiously even now, and making us richer every day.'

This is not intended either as praise or as a compliment, but is merely stated in a cold way, as a fact. And it is a fact. Whether it is one for congratulation or not is another matter. It depends on one's point of view. To me it is a cause of rejoicing.

Although I have talked a little of modern Irish literature elsewhere in this book, I must stress the view again here of its importance. Ireland has produced and is producing now an amazing amount of good literature in proportion to its population. It is not perhaps a literature of the very highest class. It is perhaps a little of the furze-bush as opposed to the orchid order. But the furze has qualities which God in His wisdom and of His purpose has denied to the orchid.

'The whin was frankincense and flame.' Swinburne said that: it is not for me to try and better his words.

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CHAPTER XI

REFLECTIONS

The Sadness of Ireland—The Friendly Spirit in the Dublin Streets—The Peace and Prosperity prior to the Home Rule Bill—The Lack of Joy in present-day Dublin—Contradictory Forces—Ulster v. South, an Eternal Problem—The Importance of Creeds—Some Social Considerations—The Penalty of Orthodoxy—Dublin's Parochialism—The Slums—Town v. Country—Lack of Humour in Ireland—The Romance of Dublin

THERE is a certain sadness in Ireland; a vague, haunting air that hangs over the country-side. One was very aware of this in the less prosperous parts of Dublin. Those of us yet in early middle age can remember this very distinctly as being noticeable in our youth. This sadness had largely disappeared in the ten years prior to the war. Dublin in those days had rather a gay manner; although indeed it was always dirty, there was no feeling of decay. People in the street contrasted favourably with those of Manchester or Liverpool, and one saw far more happy faces and heard more happy voices than in the streets of an English city. A tramcar during the rush hours was often an entertaining debating society. The atmosphere was an entirely different one from that of a London bus or a Leeds trackless car. I quote a personal experience to emphasize this view.

One wet and dreary November night, it chanced that I travelled in a crowded Donnybrook tram. The vehicle was packed, and a large woman of the fishwife class forced her way in, basket upon arm. No one

offered her a seat—indeed, it would have taken two people to make the offer other than academic. The lady, no doubt tired, leaned forward and shouted, 'Where's the chivalry of Irish gentlemen?' No one responded, and she repeated the question more vehemently. A little humpbacked man sitting at the far end rose to the occasion. Holding his hands out in sympathy towards the lady, he replied in a shrill tenor, 'It's gone to blazes.' A pleasant note had been struck; the lady was found a seat, and general and agreeable conversation followed.

Another tram story may be retold. On a certain occasion, a gentleman with hobnailed boots and a clay pipe was standing in the door of a crowded tram, waiting patiently for some one to get out and leave a vacant seat. After six or seven stops at regular halts, it so chanced that no one got out. The clay-pipe gentleman stood it for some time, but at the eighth stop his nerves got the better of him, and he shouted into the steaming atmosphere, 'Have none of ye got any bloody homes at all?'

I have seen a man stop a tram in College Green, strike a match on it, light his pipe, and nod his thanks to the driver; and the driver only grinned and cursed him in a friendly way. I have sat on an outside car during a tour of the streets which were illuminated for some celebration or another, and seen a man in the crowd grasp my brother's boot and strike a match on its sole.

Such was one side of the street temper in the old days.

The sadness was there through all the good-humour; but, whether one imagines it or whether it was a fact, this had largely vanished by about 1905 or thereabouts. There were good reasons. The land question had been, in the main, settled. There was little need for agitation on economic grounds, and such agitation that there was was of a sentimental political nature. Generally

speaking, the first fourteen years of the twentieth century were years of peace and prosperity in Dublin. On going back to Dublin one is struck to-day with this note of sadness—it is most prominent. One hears hushed voices ; one sees furtive looks, and a certain nervous air is noticeable. The whole note is utterly unlike the old Dublin. What is called freedom does not seem to have brought joy : certain factors abominable to a few extremists have been removed ; certain forms of machinery of government have been replaced by other machinery, and the ordinary citizen seems a little more worried and a good deal less care-free than he was before the change.

The feeling one gets in Dublin to-day is that there is little or nothing to look forward to. That is a most important factor in the life of the ordinary man. Most of us with any heart and sense of humour can stand a lot while we see something even in the dim future to hope for. Indeed, I am not sure that this is not the mainspring of life. A sense of duty is helpful, but a sense of hope is inspiration.

One feels that such a sense of hope is lacking in the life of Dublin of to-day—the place has an air of decay, more spiritual indeed than physical, but very real to one who is not too much in its life to get a proper perspective.

Some years ago I visited Warsaw, and the same feeling arose there as Dublin induces to-day—a feeling that this had been the centre of a definite civilization, an entirely national thing, but which was slipping into an obscure vagueness, with only a misty and decadent future before it.

All sorts of contradictory forces are operating in Dublin to-day. One cannot say if their ultimate energies will act mainly for disintegration, or merely for stabilizing on a lower plane. In many ways a harmony of national life is far more difficult than it is

in England. The influences leading to a breaking-up of the social body and an opposition to harmony are many in Ireland.

Firstly, there is the Ulster versus Free State problem. This three-hundred-year-old antagonism is as acute, or more acute, than it has been in the whole course of the events which have occurred since the Plantation. Is it likely to grow less keen? One often hears the question. No one who faces the essentials can say with honesty that it is. Indeed, one can see with some considerable assurance of certainty that the breach will widen. Ulster ties grow closer and more close to Great Britain—those of the Free State deliberately less.

In countries other than Ireland the question of the vanities of Christian orthodoxy are of little account. Who in France, Germany or the U.S.A., outside a small clerical circle, cares to what particular form of creed his friend owes allegiance? No one, indeed.

In Ireland the question of belonging to a particular Church is of supreme importance. Just of as much importance to-day as it was fifty years ago. There is certainly a strong anti-clerical movement among the Roman Catholic laity, but it amounts to little so long as an adhesion to a creed is displayed. Are you a Catholic, you give your work where possible to those of your own Church. Are you a Protestant or Non-conformist, the same test applies. Efficiency counts not at all: superficial adherence to a particular form of Christianity, as interpreted by monks of the Dark Ages and of medieval times, counts for everything. The only exception is in those of the rapidly-diminishing class in Southern Ireland, the well-to-do Protestant ranks. These, as a rule, employ Roman Catholic servants, as they are far easier to get than Protestant.

The religious question has another and far deeper aspect. In Ireland a marriage between Catholic and

Protestant is most difficult—indeed, it is almost impossible, and where possible the conditions imposed are such as to make it highly repugnant to one of the contracting parties. As a consequence, there is a strong barrier between young people of both religions, and also among their parents. If a Catholic young man of good family meets a Protestant girl at a dance, say, who attracts him, he will know within the course of the evening that she 'digs with the other foot', as one says in Ireland; consequently, if he is wise and even moderately discreet, he switches off. One cannot blame him—or her—they are victims of a convention, a religious system, too big for the individual to grapple with and emerge successfully from, regarding the point of view of personal achievement or happiness. This marriage bar then stops a proper cohesion of the younger people, without which a large harmony becomes and remains always impossible. A second or third or fourth factor—place it where you will—in the scheme of civilized life is that of birth-control.

I must go back a little to history before this point can be presented intelligently here and in this present connexion.

Long, long ago the life of the male in the tribal, or pre-tribal, family was a hazardous thing. The mortality among males was certainly exceedingly high: hence the importance of large numbers of children was obvious. If you had fifty sons, and your neighbour a mere twenty, you could drive him with ease from his hunting grounds and his caves, if they were more desirable than your own; and greatly increase your comfort and possessions by the strength of your clan.

Polygamy—the natural state of man—had obvious advantages. Of course it still has, as the numerical strength of Moslem over Christianity clearly proves.

Polygamy—and man is still polygamous by nature, temperament, and impulse—is still overwhelming in

civilized man, despite a thousand years or so of restrictive legislation. The simple proof lies in the obvious natural law. A woman can have one child a year—a man a hundred.

If polygamy were not natural why does prostitution flourish in civilized countries ?

This is obviously the great difference between man and woman, although I must not digress further here on this subject. It is a by-way on the road of my main argument.

The days of polygamy and the strength contained in large families is past. Polygamy will probably, almost certainly, return again, but the large family is to-day a handicap, and, as the modern phase of civilization goes, not only a handicap but a millstone round the parents' neck. This is a section in man's progress which may or may not be permanent, but it is very vital to-day in Europe and among the colonies and the U.S.A.

Ireland, being strictly orthodox and still largely ruled by a priesthood and atmosphere based on economic conditions of the medieval and early Renaissance period, does not recognize this. Ireland continues to lose in economic resources or, in plainer words, in individual income ; therefore the cities such as Dublin have less and less to offer each generation : and each individual starts hampered in life as against those of the rest of Europe where no such illogical and ill-thought-out fancies exist.

Man must be progressive—if not, he ceases to exist. History from the Neanderthal man and upwards has shown this. Ireland by her very vehemence of religious outlook handicaps herself ; and will further handicap herself on this vital problem of the whole sex question.

Ireland, and Dublin especially, must by its present policy have an ever-narrowing outlook. One can see to-day how enormously more insular is Dublin to-day

than it was in 1912. It has cut itself off from England, and consequently from the sources that England is in touch with in its inspiration, or of changing of ideas, if you will, in politics, literature, art. I do not know about science, but Dublin never achieved much in science, and this probably is not very important from the point of view of Irish racial advance.

The gulf between educated and non-educated opinion is a vast one—in no country to-day is it wider or deeper than in Ireland. This gulf is religious rather than racial. There are vast numbers of Norman and Cromwellian settlers who are extreme Republicans and Catholics by pure accident of birth. There are thousands of pure-blooded Celts who are Orangemen and Protestants. Race comes in hardly at all—religion at every turn.

The organization of post-war Ireland, and more especially of Dublin of to-day, is essentially middle class. If there is any strife or war, one rather wonders how this class will deal with it. It is a matter of interesting speculation. A middle class is effective enough in times of peace, but in war it seems, from the lessons of history, that Tory-*cum*-military dictatorship is essential.

Modern civilization has done away with the feudal idea, but not with that product of feudal times—war. This gives us the means to be troublesome, and no method or system by which the trouble can be dealt with. This may, and probably will, mean difficulties for those governing Ireland, precisely as such difficulties troubled those who loved Ireland in the years of 1914–20. One hopes that the future governors may have more peace and more success than those of that unhappy period.

Some one in defining evolution said that some people take and work for whatever they really want, and define this as the aim of evolution. It may be true or

not—I keep an open mind—but it certainly seems that this view is the one held by those that have led Dublin politically for some years. The case for this point of view can be argued very powerfully, but it amounts in the ultimate issue to a defence of selfishness, and as such is rather abhorrent to most people whose philosophy lies a layer or two below the obvious.

Among the great differences in the life of Dublin and London is this, I think. In Ireland there is no spiritual idea as you find it developed in the rural people and among the city-dwellers of England. The English as a race give loyalty to acts and to life itself. The Irish to the profession of a creed unreal in relation to life. In Dublin people mind most vigorously by what road they approach the hill, and so little the way in which the hill itself is surmounted. If there is a real difference between London and Dublin, racially, it is surely on these lines that it lies. In Ireland the route is everything, the method is the thing. In England the method counts not at all; the achievement is the test. If one is romantic, and if this is true, the English view is superior; if one is materialistic, then the Irish outlook is more attractive. Being of both nations, I am not rash enough to say which appeals to me. I can only say that the old idea of a romantic Ireland needs considerable readjustment.

The main fault in pre-war Dublin was, perhaps, its incivism. Only a small percentage of people took an interest in its welfare. At present it rather looks as if this fault was being attended to, but, if so, it is being dealt with with an extreme of occidentalism that may well be disastrous for the future.

To take the external and obvious social reform as an example. The problem of the slums, an acute one in Dublin, was never intelligently or seriously tackled. Perhaps it is an insoluble problem necessary to all great cities. It may not be possible to deal efficiently with

the class of people that drift or are born into the lowest of our modern social environments. And some one—I think it was Shane Leslie—wrote, such people are 'born in original gin'. How can they be dealt with? Sterilization seems the obvious and immediate method, but that is far from offering a perfect solution; although, indeed, it does promise considerable help. The London, Liverpool and Edinburgh slums offer similar problems, and on the whole are more likely to be more efficiently dealt with than are those of Dublin.

The town-planning movement, very active and vital to-day, holds out some hope; but even if all the fine ideas of planning, improved housing and general amenities put forward by those interested were carried out to-morrow, the social, physiological and psychological problems remain untouched. This is a very big question—possibly, from a national point of view, the most important that confronts any modern government of Western Europe. It is specially important in Dublin.

In Ireland of pre-war days and of to-day there was a great agricultural population whose interest was opposed in an entirely unsympathetic degree to that of the towns. In their turn the towns were hostile to the rural interests—tragically, but naturally enough. In the time of the rebellion there was a sort of unity on the part of those of extreme views, but this was unnatural and merely a passing thing.

This is a further disintegrating force, among others considered in this chapter. It is a force which is strongly opposed to a national unity. To develop this parochial or group idea a little farther, we must think of the energies that are making towards Irish insularity to-day and in pre-war times. I have talked a little of this previously, but there is another point of view which, it seems to me, should be spoken of—and, more important, thought of.

I have discussed a few of the points that are making

for Dublin an isolated position among the world's capitals. The separation from England by political and economic barriers is in itself no small matter; but far more important is the intellectual and spiritual separation caused by the attitude of those in power in Ireland to-day. In the pre-war years this intellectual hostility was obvious enough, but was largely counteracted by the welding forces that operated against it. The welding forces are now in the dustbin, and there is nothing to oppose the gestures of the child shaking itself free from its nurse, that are so obvious a feature of Dublin life to-day to those who look on and observe its growth with a devoted but impotent love.

One sees the social fabric slipping, slowly it is true, but nevertheless surely, down the hill. Where will it bring up?

One of the causes is the lack of humour in Irishmen concerning anything which tends to criticize their methods and outlook. I question, indeed, if there is much sense of humour in Ireland at all, except among the Anglo-Irish, or should one say West Britons? What is generally called humour is in reality wit, a very different thing, and one that is possessed in a high degree by most Irishmen. I should like to develop this point, but as I am concerned with social questions rather than with subtle abstractions of the above nature, must curb my desire and get on. I shall, however, give one concrete case in support of my view.

Recently I was discussing the outlook in Ireland with a well-known man of the Romanesque-Byzantine-saffron-kilt-Gaelic revival type. We were talking of reforms that should be carried out, and I suggested to him, by way of gently pulling his leg, that the pillar-boxes in Dublin should be abolished and new ones set up which should be modelled in the form of miniature round towers. To my surprise he took my suggestion

quite solemnly, and said it was a splendid idea. Desiring then to see how far I could go with him, I suggested that the handles of doors in public buildings should be remodelled as Irish wolfhounds! He swallowed this too, and went off to some committee meeting or other, where I have no doubt he passed the idea on. I doubt if anyone other than an Irishman of this type could have seriously accepted such nonsense: the lack of humour was incredible.

I have recently read Mr. St. John Ervine's last book, in which he deals, in his brilliant way, with certain prominent writers of the generation previous to his own. Like most Irishmen, he cannot keep off politics for long, and in one chapter he discusses the events of the last few years, and castigates his native land with a pretty heavy rod.

This is an excellent thing, and Ireland as a whole should really take more trouble to understand what other people think of her. I don't know any country that is so impatient of criticism, and I do not know why it should be so. The common view in Ireland is that everything good in the country is autochthonous, and that all the evils which exist have been forced upon her and are exotic. This is a ridiculous point of view and cannot but narrow the vision of those who hold it.

The truth is that the nations of Western Europe are so mixed up ethnologically that it is precious hard to trace what is the predominating strain and where the main influences come from. Some of the most Irish of the Irish have only been in the country a few generations; and you can find people who trace their pedigree back to pre-Norman days who are essentially English in their outlook and habits.

It is curious in how many countries one finds two rival cities each representing different phases of national life and mutually intolerant of each other. In Spain, Barcelona and Madrid; in Scotland, Glasgow and

Edinburgh ; in England, Oxford and Birmingham, are examples that come to the mind, though, indeed, of recent years Oxford is becoming rather like Birmingham. Ireland is no exception. Dublin and Belfast have for many generations glared, metaphorically, at each other. Dublin, for hundreds of years, has stood for all that is represented by ' culture '. It has sent distinguished sons all over the world, and they have contributed their full share to the general advance of learning and civilization. Belfast, during its comparatively brief life, has, on the other hand, concentrated its whole energy on practical matters of commerce. It has also contributed much to the advance of modern life ; but in an entirely different way from Dublin.

Dublin, before the war, regarded Belfast as an uncouth place where the inhabitants spoke with an unpleasant accent, and whose main topics of conversation were money and a persistent and wholehearted disparagement of all things pertaining to Rome. Dublin is, or at least was, one of the most important cities in the British Isles from an architectural and intellectual point of view. Indeed, outside London, no other town held such a fine array of public buildings. It is true that these all belonged to one period ; but this, while perhaps making the city somewhat lacking in the variety found in, say, York or Canterbury, gave a harmony and civic dignity hardly found elsewhere ; I can think of no parallel. Dublin was essentially a capital. Its people had a sort of reflected glory and were essentially citizens, and not merely inhabitants, as they are in, say, Leeds or Bradford.

Belfast, on the other hand, was, and is, despite its recent promotion to capital rank, merely a provincial industrial town. It has no buildings, no history ; and its university, while admirable in many respects, has none of the halo and tradition of Trinity. It has none of Trinity's connexion with the past. I remember

just before the war a story went the rounds of the Dublin Bar concerning a well-known lawyer who had left the North to take up practice in Dublin. His manners were somewhat—shall I say rough ?—which was a cause of much satirical comment among those with whom he came into contact. It was said of him that he was caught near Belfast bounding from crag to crag, and was partially tamed and brought South. After much patient effort had been spent on his education, he was at last, with great difficulty, taught to say, ' Same again ', but no amount of training could ever make him learn to say, ' What's yours ? ' This has always been to me symbolic of the attitude of Dublin to Belfast.

On the other hand, I heard Dublin referred to recently by a well-known Northerner as ' a one-horse city where nothing had happened for a hundred years '—hardly an accurate statement. So much for the difference of point of view. In fact, there are not two cities in Europe in which the same language is spoken more differently than Dublin and Belfast. This difference has been enormously accentuated since the recent political upheaval. Belfast could be joined to Glasgow or Manchester and feel quite happy. It is even now, despite bad trade, a hive of industry and enterprise, and energy is writ all over its surface. Also, it has a good deal of fun and laughter.

On the other hand, Dublin to-day can only be compared to the half-dead cities of Spain. It has amazing features in its moral and social life. Where are there two cathedrals and two universities and such broad acres of slums found in so small an area ? Where else, outside Spain, do people talk and talk everlastingly of politics, while their half-ruined city rapidly disintegrates ?

It is said that, when Wren was marking out the site for the new St. Paul's, one of the workmen brought

him a piece of stone, which he had picked up at random, to set at the centre of the ground plan. It was a fragment of an old tomb and bore the auspicious word 'Resurgam'—'I shall rise again'. This good omen, it is said, gave rise to the sculptured Phoenix over the south transept door, symbolizing the resurrection of the new cathedral out of the ashes of Old St. Paul's. It is a tragedy that, after so auspicious a beginning, the architect was subjected to so much petty persecution and injurious interference during the prosecution of his great design. But for this, and for that lack of means which has so often undermined the noblest enterprises of art, rubble-filled piers would never have been substituted for the solid supports on which Wren intended that his work, built 'not for time but for ever', should rest. If it is conceivable that the great architect is in the same region of the unseen world as those others who were responsible for the rubble in those piers, and if Wren ever deigns to hold converse with them, one can imagine with how righteous a wrath and how well-warranted a satisfaction he must point to the subscription list in *The Times* and wither them with an 'I told you so'.

Aubrey, who lived in the same century as Ben Jonson, tells us that Rare Ben worked as a bricklayer under the direction of his stepfather, and that 'he wrought, particularly, on the garden wall of Lincoln's Inn, next to Chancery Lane'. A knight or bencher, according to Aubrey, heard the bricklaying youth quoting something out of Homer, and had him sent to Trinity College, Cambridge. Fuller, also a seventeenth-century man, tells us in his *Worthies of England* that Jonson, 'obliged by the family poverty, helped in the new structure of Lincoln's Inn, where, having a trowel in his hand, he had a book in his pocket'. Of course both these picturesque accounts of the great man's youth have been rejected by some later writers. Nothing so

infuriates a researcher as the sight of a picturesque detail. If no contemporary or early evidence is forthcoming for its discrediting, a keen critic can always find conclusive evidence in his own mind. But the bricklaying detail has lived down all but the most sceptical opposition, and there is no doubt that Ben for a time was a bricklayer. One wonders if the trowel left any mark on his literary hand. Did the solid construction of his dramas owe anything to his labours at Lincoln's Inn ? Had those stout chunks of learning and observation with which he built up his characters anything to do with the bricks he fitted into that garden wall ?

Those who were building in Ireland in pre-war days were, I think, building in Wren's, or perhaps Jonson's, spirit. One can only hope this spirit survives to-day.

I love Ireland : Dublin will always be my real home ; I do not expect again to find in physical things in life the joy and exhilaration of the tramp home to the city over the ' Feather Bed ', or down the ' Black Valley ' after a long day, or several days, in the Wicklow Mountains. This was life.

The setting of Dublin between mountains and sea is a wonderful setting, the glories of which help one as keenly ten years after they have been realities as much as they did when they were among the joys of life of every day.

A walk home at evening in the misty gas-lit streets—streets of vague deep purple shadows and mysterious roof lines—with yellow zigzag gleams of reflected lights in canal and river, remain in the memory as equally romantic and adventurous as the outer fringe of hill and coast. One hopes that the old grey city may prosper, and may its spirit grow to collective ideals of which Geoffrey Young has splendidly written of a beloved boy :

I wish him sight,
That he may read the world's real beauties right ;
And for himself wit and a laughing heart ;
Lest he may rage to bear so small a part.

I wish this for Dublin.

CHAPTER XII

DUBLIN'S SUBURBS

Character of Suburbs — Rathmines — Seventeenth-century Remains—A Sham Keep—The Dodder—Mr. Fox—A Fine Artery—The Squares—The Roads—The South Side—Sandymount—Kingstown—Partings and Meetings—Bray—Unspoilt Enniskerry—Glasnevin and the North Side—Howth a Wonderful Playground—The Recent Developments near Foxrock

THE suburbs of Paris have perhaps the most individuality of those of any modern city, at any rate in those countries known to me. New York and Bombay may, for all I know, have more claim to distinction on such grounds. I am thinking more of Western Europe.

The suburbs of Dublin in pre-war days had each a sort of character—they took a place with one's grand-aunt or uncle in one's mind. Rathmines and Cousin Jane stood for the same things, Malahide and Uncle General St. John Clare stood for others—romance, adventure and love of life. Perhaps this attitude of attributing characteristics of a personal nature to districts is common to all men who have lived long in cities—that may well be so. I do not know. Certainly it is so in my own case.

Cumberland, the Strand, Sackville Street, Cornwall, the Somme valley, Worcester, are places that come into the mind at random. Each stands for something fine and noteworthy in one's knowledge of and attitude to life: each stands to me for something big, something

noble, but different from each other in their contributions to the hodge-podge that makes up the experience of life. Yet some of these places are like each other. Why should the Strand and Sackville Street stand for such different things in one's outlook? They are really very similar and express much the same general sort of civilized humanities. Yet different they are, and no one who knows them both well will disagree with me in this.

Two great suburbs that are part of Dublin are Rathmines and Rathgar. I believe there is some sort of social distinction between the two. Rathmines looks down on Rathgar, or Rathgar looks down on Rathmines, I do not know which. For my own part, I never succeeded in finding out where Rathmines stopped and Rathgar began. It remains an insoluble cross-tram puzzle to me to this day.

Rathmines has an ancient and honourable history. It is indeed as ancient as Dublin and dates as a prominent place from, at least, Danish times. It had an Anglo-Norman settlement and no doubt was of importance relatively in Elizabethan times, though the records are nearly dumb concerning this. It came into its full pride, however, in the Georgian period when many fine houses and villas were erected in its fields: fields which linked up the aristocratic squares and streets of the south side of Dublin with Rathfarnham and Terenure. These latter districts, well favoured by Nature, became popular as residential areas among the nobility, gentry and merchant class of Dublin during the eighteenth century. Of course they were so before that time, but the seventeenth-century social conditions around Dublin precluded any ambitious development and adventure in the realm of aristocratic life and of a grand architecture, and very few remains before 1700 exist as a tangible evidence of a large and generous life prior to that time.

The old Bawn, a modest enough house near Tallaght, now a small farm, originally the home of a family of distinction, built in the seventeenth century, alone remains as evidence of the culture of the day. This house contained some rather remarkable interior decoration, the origin of which is somewhat obscure. The mantelpiece from the hall is to-day to be seen in the Dublin Museum. There is a good deal to suggest that it is Dutch in origin and inspiration, and possibly in its craftsmanship. It is certainly not typical of Ireland of the time. Belgard Castle, which I have mentioned elsewhere in these pages as my grandfather's home and my own birthplace, included as part of its structure a tower reputed to be of much older date than the rest of the house. I am inclined to doubt this, and rather believe the tower is one of those freaks common to the designers of buildings of the eighteenth century and a rather futile attempt at a reproduction of a medieval keep. Indeed I feel pretty sure that this is so.

Rathfarnham Castle is another large country house where a similar fake occurs. Its gate-house is obviously of Georgian date. The Anglo-Irish of that time were as snobbish as their English relations, and dearly loved a show. It doesn't really much matter, perhaps, except it makes things a little more confusing to the modern student.

Rathmines, Terenure and Rathfarnham, and all that district, are dotted with good Georgian houses and cottages that have been largely surrounded and built against by meaner dwellings of more recent times.

Rathmines occupied a position in Dublin life which was largely determined by the way it was pronounced. The upper stratum of Dublin society called it honestly enough Rathmines. A certain section of would-be 'English accent' fashion pronounced the *a* long and talked of Rāthmines. The extreme Castle Catholic element referred to is as 'Rawthmines'. One family

who occupied rooms in a minor road and who were very particular, and who came into my ken on one occasion, even went so far as to refer to the lodging as 'our place in Rathminés'. One does not associate Rathmines with fairies, yet James Duncan wrote a play—a pantomime I think it was—in which the fairy queen was represented as having her dwelling in the fairy Rath of Mines. She used to catch the last tram home, a charming habit, and one which has been well followed by the modern fairies of the district.

Wandering farther afield, past Terenure and up the valley of the Dodder, which I speak of again in this chapter, one arrived at Tallaght, after passing Terenure and Templeogue. Tallaght holds three claims to fame. It was the seat of that glorious feat of arms, the Battle of Tallaght. Anyone who has not read of this has missed a lot, and should rectify his omission. The accounts by the historians of the beaten side are specially inspiring. It was the scene of a visit by the Phoenix Park murderers, whose tale has added so materially to the picturesque side of Dublin's history of the days of one's youth. Thirdly, and most importantly, it was the home for many years of that delightful person, Mr. Fox. Mr. Fox was a publican and a sinner. I have sinned in his company; would that I had such company to sin in again to-day. One of the kindest-hearted of men and with as keen a sense of fun as it is possible to possess, he ran his pub with an autocratic hand and an open back door during prohibited hours.

Fox's stories have travelled the world over, and justly so. They will not stand re-telling, as they demand the original setting, and any attempt at reproduction by the written word is as futile as—what can one say?—as futile as trying to draw a net without any cords.

I once lent Fox a pony and trap. He arrived at my cottage one night, tired and wet, with three long, windy

miles yet to travel. I went out and harnessed my pony, and Fox got into the trap and drove off in the inky blackness of a winter's night. I did not see my pony for three weeks. Ultimately he turned up in charge of Fox and another friend, and we spent a cheerful evening over my fire.

Despite what I have said about the re-telling of one of Fox's stories, there is one I must tell. While sitting in his parlour one night, he described to us the events of the day, events which had occurred at a large local auction.

'There I was comin' away, and there was a big scales there which I thought it 'ud be a joke to take. So I called to James, and we lifted it across the ford of the Dodder, wadin' as carefully and as easy as if we were carryin' a corpse. In the middle of the river we dropped it: and then the drink ran out and the boys that had bought the scales came out to seek it, and when they couldn't find it, you'd have heard their roars from Rathmines to Firhouse.

'So I thought the best of my play was to leg it away home, and on I went along the road till I took a trip and landed on my back, me eyes gazin' at the twinklin' stars—in a big furze-bush. I lay and I kicked and I struggled: it was not a bit of good, move I could not.

'"Fox," says I, "you're very awkwardly placed."'

I loved to picture my excellent friend lying on his back in a furze-bush and seriously addressing himself. This detached and impersonal attitude towards one's own misfortunes is a very engaging quality.

The River Dodder, which name expresses its main characteristic, although indeed its derivation has nothing to do with that pleasant verb, flows past Tallaght and Templeogue through the less choice districts of Donnybrook and Ballsbridge. Over all this area, however, the Dublin Mountains spread a friendly background of fellowship, and their purple and

blue shapes have an allure and a glory that is reflected in the plains that lie at their bases. It is a fortunate land—a land of stream and wood and glad meadow. A land of winding lanes and romantically-placed farms, where lichen-covered stone walls mix with age-old thorn hedges and present a feast of delight to the eye ; and, if one wanders there for a day or two, of repose and comfort to the soul. A cheerful country where reasonable material success is pleasantly intermingled with the fine things of the senses, producing a satisfaction of outlook on the part of both the resident and the traveller. Had I been Thomas Moore I would have written my verses of this valley of the Dodder rather than of Avoca.

The approach to Dublin from this side is not lacking in dignity. It has been the custom for several generations to laugh at Terenure (the old Round Town) and the roads of Rathgar and Rathmines. But indeed these are not lacking in monumental qualities. What English city presents so notable an artery as the highway from Terenure through the two long, suburban thoroughfares over Portobello Bridge, round a picturesque corner and down through the Georgian houses of Harcourt Street to the great open space of St. Stephen's Green ? I know of no parallel in any other town. I do not believe there is anything to compare to this three or four miles in an approach to any city of England. London has nothing like it—for all the main routes into London are overcrowded and mean. There is nothing mean in this fine Dublin highway.

I have written a little seriously of Rathmines, for by this name I think of all that side of Dublin beyond Harcourt Street. There are, however, many rather frivolous thoughts in one's mind in connexion with that area.

One evening during an Arts Club dinner, when Maud Allan was at the height of her fame, my old friend Jim

Duncan sang a song, a version of which ran something as follows :

> We don't like that girl in Rathmines.
> We won't have that girl in Rathmines.
> Let her take her wild dance
> To Drumcondra, or France—
> For we can't have such things in Rathmines.

The young ladies of Rathmines crowd into the trams to get to their offices in the mornings ; they crowd into them at night to get to the cinemas or to meet their young men in the city. Their lipsticks and their powder-puffs are as keenly used as they are in Balham or Wimbledon, or Roundhay in Leeds. The young men wander about in flannels and plus-fours, of a summer evening. The old people and the prosperous ones of middle age protrude their pot-bellies here as prominently as those citizens of Bradford. Yet, as a whole, they are vastly different from Bradford. A spiritually and aesthetically superior people. In Rathmines they have no whippets, no wool-brokers, and no industrialism. Thank God for that !

If one thinks backwards a little—thinks of the last years of the nineteenth century in Dublin—one rather amusing fact stands out. From the point of view of those in ' society ' of the time, Dublin was inhabited by a population whose houses were situated in Merrion and Fitzwilliam Squares and the streets and places and terraces in their immediate vicinity. A few old-fashioned people did indeed live on the other side of the river, in Rutland and Mountjoy Squares, but they were regarded as eccentric, and it was a bore when social demands arose which called for an evening visit to the wrong side of the Liffey. Such was the swing of the pendulum of the time. In the early part of the century the balance had been fairly even. At the date of Waterloo there were about forty peers resident in

Dublin, and their houses were distributed equally on either side of Sackville Street Bridge—O'Connell Bridge, I believe, nowadays.

At the end of last century Dublin had spread widely, and large numbers of professional people, and many others of good birth and breeding, occupied houses in 'The Roads'. Clyde Road, Elgin Road, Morehampton Road, Pembroke Road, all held good, substantial houses, the owners of which were judges, colonels, leading lawyers and country gentry whose places were let; and many other folk of similar stratum. A pleasant enough society, whose common meeting-ground was the Castle, and the great Dublin houses, and the leading clubs of that time. I should add that the civil service was important. Its leading men, heads of departments, were all as a matter of course socially assured, and were members of the good clubs, and had access to any social life they desired. Whether this made for a fine body politic or not I do not know: but it was very pleasant, and did make for a social life the like of which has not occurred since the pre-mutiny days of the old East India Company. Perhaps it was on rather a small scale: probably too small a scale to count for anything very much—success for the individual was too easy. But against this must be put the fact that there was an intimacy of life, a knowledge of the other person's mind that added to the individual appreciation of the other man's worth, and to an admiration of his sense of achievement. Very different to the London or Paris of to-day, where the social life is so vast, and springing from so many different things, that it precludes all sense of a common interest—or indeed any interest other than academic in the circle outside one's own.

At the end of last century the wider social life of Dublin spread, then, out into 'The Roads'. Of course

there had for a long time prior to this been families of first-rate standing who lived in the Georgian villas and country-houses surrounding the immediate suburbs. Dundrum, Milltown, Blackrock, Kingstown, Bray, Terenure, Clondalkin and Lucan had all held their tenantry of folk of distinction, and whose houses were of distinction too. Most of the inhabitants of the larger places in this circle round the city were of a curious blend of country gentry and town class. The men were mostly civil service or professional people whose duties took them daily to Dublin. The women were not so tied, and lived the life of country gentlewomen of their period—hunting and the like, entertaining a good deal, and with little hereditary call on a larger social life to claim much of their time among less fortunate brethren, which was so important a factor in the lives of upper-class Englishwomen of the time.

The men of the period and of that class in Ireland had an amazingly hard task to perform—their womenkind a very easy one. They were very much in the position of the women of the successful American business men of to-day: aloof and outside the life of their country, politically and socially corks, and rather highly-bobbing corks, carried along on the waves, in a pleasant and cheerful flow towards the rapids of the end of the second decade of the twentieth century; those rapids destined to finish the old regime in Dublin.

One must think of other external phases of Dublin life of the time I am considering.

There is the whole group of townships or suburbs on the southern littoral, each with its individuality; but with a strong sentimental cohesion in a common unity—the sea. On emerging from the city, going towards the hills and the old ocean seaboard, one presses one's way through Ringsend. What an area of docks, and bridges,

and rotting wharves and derelict shipyards! What an area of decayed pubs, of squalid lines of dwellings, and ruined once-ambitiously-inclined warehouses! Yet this district belongs to the sea.

As Holmes—an excellent writer of light verse—wrote some years ago :

> That highly odoriferous locality Ringsend
> No semi-sanitarian will ever recommend :
> But Sandymount, its next-of-kin,
> Was ever known to be
> Unquestionably popular with lovers of the sea.

Sandymount, most bourgeois, perhaps, of all Dublin's suburbs, really joins on to Ringsend, although it is doubtful if its inhabitants would admit it.

Sandymount, like Rathmines, has some rather jolly houses—miniature country-places of late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century date. It has a shore, long, wide and generally enormous and overwhelming, from which the sea is always absent. Occasionally, at rare intervals, a foot or so of shining translucent water covers the vast tract of sand. But I firmly believe that the ordinary mathematical custom of the tides is non-operative here, and that high tide only occurs once a month. On the other hand, low tide comes for the whole day on the other twenty-nine or thirty.

I do not suggest that Sandymount is not attractive. It is. But its attraction is not such as would appeal to the tripper (other than children). Its attraction lies in certain old-world charm, in the secluded gardens, the open view of cloud, distant coastline and wide space of sandy shore ; seen perhaps at its best when the tide has just receded of an autumn evening, when the wet sand gives back the greys, yellows, madders and lakes of the clouds and zenith as the day sinks to its close. Nowhere, not even on the heights of the cliffs of Donegal, of Vigo Bay, or of Persian deserts, have I seen more

beautifully-blended tones and evening painting of the sky.

Living, as I do, far from the sound and sight of the sea, my sometime ambition is a little house at Sandymount, with sea-pinks on its walls, and the slow, low waves crooning over the bar at dusk before my modest entrance.

It is the sea of which one thinks in one mood and of a certain aspect, but a very lovely and seductive one.

Wandering farther along, one comes by a tram-burdened route to Booterstown and Blackrock. What can be said of these places? Little enough but that they contain excellent butchers' shops and post-offices. These things are, of course, needful, but Walt Whitman alone of modern writers could use them as subjects for attention with any degree of success.

If one would see the romance of this route, and there is romance in any route, even in Tara Street or the Edgware Road, or, indeed, the Appian Way (choose which you will, the Appian Way of Rome or Dublin), he should follow the shore outside the railway-line and tram-track, and walk on a sunny winter's morning from Sandymount to Kingstown. How many folk resident in Dublin have ever done this? Not a hundred, I imagine, not a thousand I dare wager. Yet no town under suitable conditions, holds a fairer walk. I think of it during a sunny winter morning: yet there are other times which are equally worth while for such a wandering. A foggy late afternoon, or in the twilight of a summer night, are equally good. The little cliffs and the pools, the clump of black seaweed and the great eternal dignity of the sands and waters form countless pictures and give one permanent memories of the beauty of the earth, as surely as do the great vistas on the Shannon or the silhouettes of the Mourne Mountains, or the Reeks themselves.

One gets to Kingstown. I know it is not called that

now, but it would be affectation on my part to style it otherwise. Kingstown is to us Irish as are Dover, Southampton, Plymouth or Tilbury to English people. The scene of many partings, of many reunions, of countless heartbreaks and joys. Anyone of middle age in Ireland must have memories galore of its hotel, its harbour and its mail-boats.

To a large section of Dublin people it stands for sport, for is it not the centre of Irish yachting? Its yacht clubs contain in their guest-books the signatures of most celebrities of their world for a long time back, and the clubs are noted the world over for their hospitality and good-comradeship. It chanced I lunched this year at the Plymouth Yacht Club on the day when the finish of the race for ocean-going yachts took place round Drake's Island, and under the club's windows. I sat, a stranger, and not at all a yachtsman, with five others at table. We talked of other yacht clubs, and the St. George's was mentioned. All of us had been there frequently. A strange bond for a landsman with his fellow-lunchers, but one which was so real as to develop lunch into afternoon and afternoon to dinner and a very pleasant evening in a house on distant Dartmoor.

Kingstown, beyond its energies I have spoken of, is not of importance in Dublin life. Its streets and squares are quite modern, and its pavilion is certainly used to house only the most second-rate entertainments. One can't think of Kingstown without thinking also of the cross-Channel boats. One remembers them when they were paddle-boats and travelled on them on journeys to and from one's prep. school. How they used to roll, and how sick we used to be, especially coming from Holyhead, where an elaborate but ill-chosen dinner at Euston, after the austere food of a school-term, had played havoc with a small inside. Ragging and sweets in the train, and then the boat!

What hours of misery were endured! However, the adventure was well worth it, and I still pity those English boys whose homes lay in the same country as their school, and who went tamely to and from school by carriage or short train journey. Our more ambitious journey seemed to us part of the school adventure, and indeed a large part, specially bestowed on us by virtue of being Irish.

Of later years one has many memories of Kingstown and the North Wall. So many good friends here said good-bye, on these raw sodden platforms, for the last time—so many times has one said a sad good-bye when departing oneself. The war brought such matters to a degree of pain and joy undreamed of before. The partings then were sadder and the meetings as glad as those of one's youth. I think of a cheerful story of my young days in connexion with the Holyhead boats. My brothers and I were crossing. It was a terribly rough night and the boat was very crowded. We found an unoccupied passage and lay down on the floor on a pile of lifebelts. In the middle of the night my brother was very restless and sick, and he said, 'This damned pile of belts is bothering me.' The ship gave a lurch, and he, rolling on the floor, misquoted the line, 'O pile, it is a fearful night!' Despite our extreme discomfort we had to laugh.

From Kingstown the natural lie of the land and social connexions take one to Bray and Killiney, less important districts connecting them up by the rivets of golf clubs and other such mutually attractive centres.

Killiney, however, has a character of its own. In the early days of its rise to fame, about the middle of the nineteenth century, it became popular as a summer resort for the well-to-do Dublin families. It was not really residential till the last quarter of the century. It had no cohesion, no collective social life, and its hill-side was dotted with the houses of rich families

who spent their summer there while caretakers held high revel in their houses in Merrion Square. The wives and daughters spent the late-Victorian days in ladylike pursuits, in wandering on Killiney Hill; in sitting on its shingly beach. The fathers and sons caught the 9.15 from Killiney or Shankhill stations, and spent their days in the usual activities, returning in the evening to a little tea and tennis, or, later, to golf. All of which was very nice and precise. I never heard of Killiney contributing anything to the world. I do not think, such is its respectable condition, that even during the troublesome times of recent years it contributed one good gunman to the so-called Irish cause. It was indeed remarkable for its lack of distinction.

Bray, of greater antiquity and more honourable history, is of quite a different character. There was a fishing-village and small harbour here long before Elizabeth sat on the English throne; and its history has continued without a break since pre-Norman days. Bray was of not much importance in the life of Dublin till about the second quarter of the nineteenth century. When the seaside holiday vogue came in—just before the middle of the last century—Bray became in a few years the most popular resort for fashionable Dublin. It must have been attractive enough in those days. It had mountains, a fine river, a good beach and imposing cliffs in close proximity to its front or promenade, a feature new to and popular with the upper class of the time, and still dearly loved by the lower-middle and working classes of to-day, who enjoy spending a gregarious holiday.

Bray Head, still romantic and wild despite fifty or sixty years of urban encroachment, must have been all that lovers of solitude could have wished for fifty years ago. During the close of last century and in the early years of 1900 Bray had sunk socially, and by about 1910 or so it had become a vulgar seaside resort, with the

usual bands and cheap entertainments dear to the guests of the boarding-houses and apartment-houses who made up the larger section of those who supported its short summer season.

Since then it has deteriorated still further, and I was depressed on the occasion of my last visit to notice its fifth-rate and impoverished look. Up to the time of the war one could at least go to Bray of a summer evening as an objective for dinner, by motor or rail, and even on occasion by four-in-hand. It seems that this is no longer possible. A high-tea in a shoddy hotel hardly offers even the inducement of an earlier if somewhat old-fashioned time.

On a route leading, but not very directly, to Bray, but often taken in one's young days for its picturesque qualities—that is the route via Clonskeagh—one passed through a suburban and rural area of supreme beauty. Clonskeagh itself has the same general qualities as Rathgar, its fairly close neighbour. Some find old places survive which had withstood the assault of the villas and terraces of modern commercial days. Dundrum, a little farther out, is in even better case, and its fine main road leads one on to that extremely picturesque village of Stepaside (ill-named but well-placed) which serves as an introduction to the pass culminating in the narrow col of the Scalp. In pre-cycling days the Scalp was a wild and inspiring place—the bicycle prostituted it, and motors, and now charabancs have made it as populous as the Tottenham Court Road, or the Land's End ; and as paper and bottle-laden as Hampstead Heath or the popular parts of Phœnix Park. Alas for departed glories ! alas for the spoiling of natural loveliness through man's dirty, untidy ways !

Enniskerry is not a Dublin suburb, it is still of sufficient independence to retain its individual life. Charming and most picturesque of hill villages—indeed, one could almost write mountain villages—it retains

its residential families of honourable pedigree and antiquity, and has suffered little or no encroachment by Dublin tentacles.

So far I have dealt with the southern side of Dublin, and before I leave this side I must speak a very little on the dear hills that are beloved by all who have lived in that part of the country. The Three Rock, the Two Rock, the Hell-fire Club, Catty Golagher, Slieve Coolin and Douce are all familiar shapes to those who dwell on the south side. Their outlines of evening, their broken masses under conditions of winter snow, their vivid detail of wood, glen and torrent after rain on a spring day, are all sweetly familiar to those who live near them and love them. No other city of the British Isles is so favoured in its friendly relation to the mountains—no other city has such kindly angels keeping watch over its sanity of outlook.

Away on the north side, and across the Liffey, the environments strike an altogether different note. They are less individual, less Irish.

Glasnevin, once an Elizabethan village, and a considerable market town in the Georgian period, is now no more than a collection of vulgar modern terrace streets. As a youth I used sometimes to pass through it on my way to visit some acquaintances of my people, a certain family of Lindsays who had a large villa or small urban 'place' near the tram-terminus at Glasnevin. I am not very clear in my recollection of this place—it is rather remote now—but think that this family were Scotch, and settled in Dublin and bought a small property, which was sold to speculative builders, and was the ground on which the lower-middle-class district of Glasnevin was built up.

Swords and Malahide were not very far away, and together with Raheny contained many good old houses and families who played a considerable part in the social and political life of Dublin of the late nineteenth century.

The most attractive, however, of the suburbs, or linked-up areas of Dublin, on the north side is Howth. I suppose, strictly speaking, Howth is not a suburb geographically, as it is separated from Dublin by an open farming country. Socially, however, it is a suburb, as it is in fact largely inhabited by Dublin people using it as a dormitory. It is, of course, also a substantial fishing centre, where boats from all over England are wont to put in and use as their port while the local fishing season obtains.

Howth is a fair peninsula nearly surrounded by the sea where it widens beyond its isthmus. Its cliffs rise to considerable heights and are picturesquely broken into pinnacles, gullies and bold buttresses, with here and there a little beach of shingle, and here and there a tumbled shoot of gigantic scree. The cliff walk, running for some miles amid rocky outcrops, heather, bracken, and occasional groups of salt-swept trees, is very beautiful. Hundreds of pairs of lovers, numerous groups of merry girls and many people of an age which it is customary to think has been deserted by romance have golden summer memories of days spent above the shining waters of its multi-tinted sea. In sunshine, rain or cloud, in summer or winter, the cliffs of Howth are as charming a playground as any I know of lying close to a great city.

Howth to Dublin people is closely associated with Ireland's Eye and Lambay, the first a rocky island whose history goes back far into the dim past, the second, Lambay, an island of considerable size, a familiar landmark to sailors of this coast, and to voyagers from Holyhead to Dublin and Kingstown.

Howth is a cul-de-sac, and to cover the remaining ground I must retreat to the city and adventure forth again. Northward again, but on the main coast road in several places,that are, while mainly rural in character, still growing more suburban by virtue of the modern

connecting link—the motor—between town and country. Rush and Lusk has each its individuality, its group of faithful visitors that descend on the little towns year after year. Each spends a winter hibernating ; except for flower-growing—bulbs, more correctly—they have no permanently active life. The fishing is seasonal here, and wakes into life with the coming of late spring sunshine and an increased train-service. One village in this part of the North Dublin coast stands out as a cameo among coarse oil paintings — Loughshinny. Loughshinny is a very old fishing-village, off the beaten track and quite unspoiled. It might be of the eighteenth century—indeed, some of its houses date from then ; it might be medieval, or it might be of Jacobean times. There is nothing to date it, it has an air of antiquity, of dignity and simplicity, an air that one finds only among people of ancient and honourable lineage.

As a matter of fact, Loughshinny is an old village, nearly certainly of continuous occupation since at least Danish times, and once containing a much larger population than it does to-day. A low, tumbled mass of rock thrust out into the sea, partly covered with a single irregular street of whitewashed houses, and ending in an absurdly large pier ; that is Loughshinny. Certain families have lived there for many generations, the most notable of them are the Carrs.

The Carrs are associated with the history of the village through many decades, and I am glad to feel that the late ' Mrs. Johnny ' of living memory and great heart was one of my friends. I am proud to remember that this brave woman, all of whose men-folk were taken by the sea while following their calling of fishers, has sat in my house in Dublin and eaten of my salt. A glad and fine memory.

Of this happy country-side it would be easy to write at great length—of visits and occasional meals at its many hospitable houses and cottages. Such memories

are too personal and too intimate to put in a book, and must stay in the heart.

I feel I have wandered a good deal in this chapter, but indeed is it not justifiable for a citizen to wander in the outskirts of his city? Does he need to excuse himself for an understanding of such meanderings? If he does, then surely both he and his critics are in a sad case.

As a last bit of wandering, then, I get to Carrickmines and Foxrock, again turning south. These districts are yet too young to have made their mark. They no doubt harbour many charming people who contribute to Dublin life; collectively they have not made any great contribution to Dublin. They are like Welwyn in relation to London—too remote and too self-satisfied to add much to the activities of a bigger life than their own, and too broadly interested in life in general to concentrate on Dublin in particular. They are a little superior, a little bit un-Irish, a little bit too plus-foured. I like them, but I don't want to run away with their women.

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